The Spanish military and the evolution of warfare, 1899-1939

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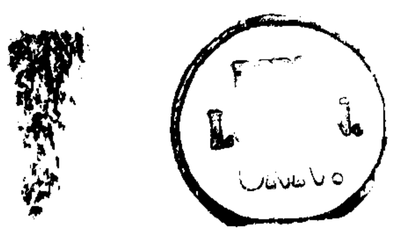

ABSTRACT.

Any assessment of the performance of the armies of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) must take into account two factors that influenced the Spanish military as a professional body from 1899 to 1936. These factors were corporate factionalism within the service, and a concept of warfare as a psychology-based contest. Corporate rivalries divided the Spanish officer corps internally and stood in the way of reforms intended to put an end to military vested interests and oversized army lists under Alfonso XIII. This situation harmed army professionalism, but the government depended on the loyalty of the army and could not implement effective reforms until the Second Republic. Misdirected longing for corporate responsibilities and prestige also affected the introduction of the machine gun and the tank, when different army branches claimed their responsibility for operating them. The concept of morale as the decisive war-winning factor was influential in the development of offensive-minded tactical doctrine before 1914, and shaped quite a few essayists' visions of future conflicts as manoeuvre warfare (as opposed to fire-power-based warfare) after 1918. This pattern of thinking also led the military to underrate the machine gun and the tank, since their mechanical nature allegedly did not help to strengthen the soldierly virtues which were reckoned essential to conquer. The limited interest in mechanization led to an unremarkable use of armour in the Civil War, whereas the build-up and performance of both sides' officer corps and major field units in this conflict reflected different pre-war professional views about the problems posed by factionalism and new ways of warfare.

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Last but not least, this writer's deepest gratitude is for his parents. Without their generosity and never-ending patience, this work would never have been possible.

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND MILITARY VOCABULARY.

This writer has made all the translations from sources in Spanish. In order to make some texts more easily understandable, readability has sometimes prevailed over literality. Arabic names have been transliterated following common usage in Spanish sources.

Excepting officer ranks (which follow British usage), the military terms used in this thesis do not follow the usage of any specific English-speaking army (e.g. the artillery battalion is currently called regiment in the British army, whereas a cavalry squadron is equal to a troop in the United States cavalry). Nonetheless, it is hoped that their meaning will be easily understood by the reader (in case of doubt, see Appendix II). When a Spanish military man is introduced as 'General', this only means that he had general officer rank.

ABBREVIATIONS.

CEDA	Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightist Groups).
CGG	Cuartel General del Generalísimo (the nationalist general headquarters during the Civil War).
ECT	Escuela Central de Tiro (Central Firing School)
EESM	Escuela de Estudios Superiores Militares (Higher Military Studies College).
EMC	Estado Mayor Central (the Spanish army's general staff).
ESG	Escuela Superior de Guerra (the Spanish army's staff college).
GOC	General Officer Commanding.

SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS.

AGMS	Archivo General Militar de Segovia (sección/división/legajo).
AMA-CGG	Archivo General Militar de Avila: Cuartel General del Generalísimo (armario/legajo/carpeta).
AMA-ZN	Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Nacional (armario/legajo/carpeta).
AMA-ZR	Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Republicana

(armario/legajo/carpeta).

AME — Anuario Militar de España.

CLE — Colección Legislativa del Ejército.

DOMG — Diario Oficial del Ministerio de la Guerra.

EM — Estudios Militares.

LCM — La Correspondencia Militar.

LGP — La Guerra y su preparación.

MA — Memorial de Artillería.

MC — Memorial de Caballería.

MI — Memorial de Infantería.

RCM — Revista Científico Militar.

REM — Revista de Estudios Militares.

RGU 1925 — Reglamento para el empleo táctico de las Grandes Unidades (1925).

RHM — Revista de Historia Militar.

RTI 1898 — Reglamento para la instrucción táctica de las tropas de infantería (1898).

RTI 1908 — Reglamento provisional para la instrucción táctica de las tropas de Infantería (1908).

RTI 1913 — Reglamento Táctico de Infantería (1913).

RTIC — Revista Técnica de Infantería y Caballería.

SHM-CAD — Servicio Histórico Militar, Archivo Central, Sección Primera: Colección Adicional de Documentos (legajo/carpeta).

INTRODUCTION.

1. Definition of subject.

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) was one of the greatest military conflicts between the two world wars of the twentieth century. It was a domestic struggle for political supremacy in Spain, but it was also seen as a battlefield for conflicting ideologies and became a major focus of international tension, which involved (with different degrees of commitment) several European powers. Such involvement could reach as far as sending combat forces, in addition to the supply of all kinds of ordnance. The ideological nature and the 'foreign connection' of the Spanish Civil War have been attractive subjects for historians, and there has been plenty of historical scholarship about them.

However, although both sides profited from the assistance provided by foreign intervention, Spain's civil conflict was essentially fought by Spanish armies. Surprisingly, this fact seems to have gone unnoticed for most historians, especially the academic ones. Non-Spanish scholars can be excused to some extent because it is natural that they are inclined to be more interested in the involvement of their own country (or a contemporary rival one) in the war. The real surprise is that Spanish historians have not taken much interest in the armies which the fate of the conflict finally depended on. This situation stems from the scarce interest of Spanish academic scholars in military history. It is not that the Spanish army is missing from the historians' works, but that they deal with the military as a political faction or a social group. This is not surprising if the reader bears in mind the history of Spain for almost two centuries after 1800, with an endemic presence of the military in politics. Unfortunately, the

scholarship on civil-military relations and 'armed forces and society' has not fostered a similar interest in warfare-related issues.

To say that the armies of the Spanish Civil War are unknown is an exaggeration, but there is more than a grain of truth in it, especially in relation to military professional matters such as tactics, logistics, training, small unit leadership, and so on. Anyone interested in the government or republican army can turn to the works of Michael Alpert (a British academic historian) and Ramón Salas Larrazábal (a senior air force officer), but they still leave the reader insufficiently informed about the issues mentioned above. And, so far as this writer is aware, there is no comparable work about the rebel or nationalist army. On the other hand, the regular officer corps of the armies of both sides were the heirs of the pre-war Spanish army. Therefore, the performance of those armies on the battlefield depended greatly on the way the Spanish military prepared for war before 1936. This last issue has been neglected in academic scholarship, and it is precisely the subject which the present writer is to address.

This thesis intends to study from a historical viewpoint the attitudes of the Spanish military towards the evolution of warfare during the early decades of the twentieth century, and their influence on the armies of the Spanish Civil War. Although this thesis emphasizes professional topics, it is necessary to include a survey of the conflictual civil-military relations which influenced - and were influenced by - the internal problems of the officer corps during this period. On the other hand, this writer has left aside almost all the campaigns which the Spanish army fought in Morocco during the period surveyed by this thesis. They were a case of colonial warfare, and their influence on Spanish

army doctrine was limited. An exception has been made with the campaign of Melilla (1909), since it was a testing ground for new Spanish infantry tactics and the machine gun, which are discussed in this thesis.

This thesis also tries to bridge a gap between the field of the historians interested in the Spanish military (who rarely are versed and interested in warfare-related issues) and that of military historians in general (who have rarely paid attention to the Spanish army from the end of the Napoleonic wars to the civil war of 1936-1939). The former are provided with information on the Spanish military's efforts to cope with changes in warfare brought by technological innovation in the early twentieth century. The latter are given an introduction to the political-military background of the period, the corporate problems and a case study in the subject of professional modernization in an army of limited resources.

Perhaps readers not well-versed in military history would have wished more detail on the general evolution of warfare, but there are many works in English which satisfy their needs. By contrast, much of the literature on Spain's political-military history is in Spanish and its availability outside Spain will often be limited. Therefore, priority has been given to the political-military narrative.

2. Historians and the evolution of the Spanish army.

Literature specifically on this thesis' subject is virtually non-existent. Admittedly, this is a highly severe statement. But this writer thinks that it is justified. Academic interest in the history of the Spanish army from 1898 to 1939 has been focused on political and social matters. Most of the literature can be

classified as studies in 'armed forces and society' or political history, featuring the military as a protagonist. As a whole, these studies leave the reader ignorant about the Spanish military's professional response to the evolution of warfare. Therefore their usefulness for a military history is limited to the role of background reading.

Given the extended scope in time of the thesis and its specific subject, the following survey includes only the most significant works dealing with the Spanish military during this thesis's chronological scope (with one exception). Their common feature is the scarce attention paid to professional matters. Literature on the Civil War (with three exceptions) has been left aside for two reasons. One of them is the sheer amount of published works, whose analysis would well deserve a full dissertation. The other reason is the virtual absence of significant works dealing with the issues tackled by this thesis.

Basic - and still among the best - introductory reading is the pioneering work of Stanley G. Payne: Politics and the Military in Modern Spain (1967); a slightly updated Spanish edition reaching until the Civil War - Ejército y sociedad en la España liberal (1808-1936) - was published in 1977. Despite being mainly based on published sources, the range of bibliographical research make these works starting points for any further study. They are quite balanced in their judgements and the narrative gives a good picture of the Spanish military after the late nineteenth century, as far as the scholarship available allowed by the mid-1970s. However, the emphasis is put on political issues and its value as a source about professional matters is limited. Carlos Seco's Militarismo y civilismo en la España contemporánea (1984) is a

study on civil-military relations from the early nineteenth century to the Civil War. Seco stands out by his defence of the alleged supremacy of civilian power under the Restoration regime, which prevailed until 1917. This view has been disputed, and Seco probably takes the military's inactivity - due to the lack of motives serious enough to intervene in politics - as indicating a civilian power stronger than it actually was.

Mention must be made of the work of Julio Busquets, El militar de carrera en España (originally published in 1967). It was a pioneering work in social science research about the Spanish military. Its third edition (1984) includes more background historical narrative. In relation to the subject of this thesis, Busquets' work is interesting for its chapter on the graduates of the Saragossa military academy in the 1927-1931 period.

Other works deal with more limited chronological periods. The book of Daniel R. Headrick, Ejército y política en España (1866-1898) (1981), is a comprehensive study of the Spanish military in the three decades before 1899, which provides handy reading about the immediate background of the period tackled by this thesis. Headrick analyses the social background of the officer corps, the conditions of service of enlisted men and the evolution of civil-military relations during that period. In contrast with many Spanish scholars, Headrick pays some attention to issues such as organization and ordnance, though he does not deal with them in depth. Carolyn P. Boyd has studied the political-military crisis of 1917-1923 in Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain (1979; an updated Spanish edition, La política pretoriana en el reinado de Alfonso XIII, was published in 1990). Hers is the most thorough survey of the subject, and also includes a fine chapter on the decay of the Spanish military before 1917. Carlos Navajas

undertakes the study of the Spanish army under Primo de Rivera's dictatorship in Ejército, estado y sociedad en España (1923-1930) (1991). Actually Navajas surveys the dictator's military policy and reforms in the officer corps, the secondment of officers to government and civil service posts, and how the regime tried to turn Spain into a military-minded country through indoctrination programmes for conscripts.

Of those works approaching the period of the Second Republic, Michael Alpert's La reforma militar de Azaña (1931-1933) (1982) is the most interesting for military historians. This work deals with the reform of the army carried out by the first republican war minister, Manuel Azaña, especially in relation to personnel policy for the officer corps. Alpert uses published sources but makes a sound analysis of the subject and pays a little attention to the Spanish army's attitudes towards military developments in Europe after the First World War. Another two books cover the events from 1931 to 1936, though in a rather straightforward narrative way. Mariano Aguilar Olivencia, in El ejército español durante la Segunda República (claves de su actuación posterior) (1986), depicts the military as a misunderstood social group facing high external pressures to play an undesired partisan role in the Second Republic's political life, whereas Gabriel Cardona's El poder militar en la España contemporánea hasta la guerra civil (1983) takes a more critical line on the military's role in the republican regime.

The military operations of the Civil War have been tackled in the series of monographs written by José Manuel Martínez Bande for the Spanish army's historical branch (Servicio Histórico Militar), most of which were published in the 1970s (a second revised edition appeared several years later). This series is the nearest

thing to an official history of the war, despite some bias in the author's judgements, and can be used as a reference work for its operational narrative (each volume often embraces more military operations than suggested by the title).

Ramón Salas Larrazábal's Historia del Ejercito Popular de la República (1973) is a bulky history of the government or republican army during the Civil War (albeit two of its four thick volumes are documentary addenda). It is a comprehensive work which makes extensive use of captured republican records, thus offering a picture of the losing side's conduct of the war more reliable than those accounts based mainly on personal memories. Salas (who, like Martínez Bande, fought in the nationalist army) provided a fresh, albeit not unbiased, view of the conflict by contrast with the often self-glorificatory accounts published in Franco's Spain after 1939. Nonetheless, this work does not discuss in detail professional matters such as training, tactics and so on. The common feature in the works of Martínez Bande and Salas Larrazábal is that both scholars blame the left-wing ideologies' alleged disorganizing nature for the underperformance of the republican forces.

The republican army has also been studied by Michael Alpert in El ejército republicano en la guerra civil (1973; a slightly revised edition was published in 1989). It is focused on the organizational evolution of the army and the officer corps. Alpert points up the handicaps of the republicans' internal political rivalries, which could not help affecting their military effort, and the awkward relationship of the pre-war regular officers with the revolutionary left, which tried to make a revolutionary army. According to Alpert, the republican army was overcoming its organizational problems by late 1938, but the nationalist side had

already achieved an overwhelming military superiority.

Some of the authors mentioned so far (Martínez Bande, Aguilera Olivencia, Salas) are military men. Cardona, a former officer, perhaps might be included within this group, but he left the army to pursue an academic career; Busquets was also an army officer, but he was dismissed because of his pro-democracy underground activities in the early 1970s. Despite their military background, many of them were more concerned with the social and political sides of the subject than with the professional ones. Besides those already mentioned, the most outstanding member of this group is Miguel Alonso Baquer, whose works often display influences from the social sciences. Although his style sometimes is nearer to abstract reflection than to the historian's learned argument, Alonso Baquer's writings often provide interesting, thought-provoking insights. Besides contributions to journals and edited works, two of his books have been useful for this thesis: El ejército en la sociedad española (1971) - an essay on the problems of military reform from the late eighteenth century to the 1930s - and Aportación militar a la cartografía española en la Historia contemporánea. Siglo XIX (1972) - where he makes interesting points about the history of the staff corps.

Much of the work of these and other military writers has been published in the army historical journal (Revista de Historia Militar) or edited works. The most useful of the latter - which also includes some civilian contributions - is Las fuerzas armadas españolas. Historia institucional y social (1986). This multi-volume work, edited by Miguel Alonso Baquer and the historian Mario Hernández Sánchez-Barba, is a history of the Spanish armed services focused on their evolution as state and social institution, with three volumes dedicated to the 1900-1939 period.

In general, the contributions are learned syntheses which can provide updated or complementary information in relation to older or more specialized works.

3. **The limitation of primary sources**.

A major problem for this thesis' purposes has been the archival evidence. There certainly are lots of records of the Civil War waiting to be exploited. By contrast, the archival sources available for the period 1899-1936 are fragmentary and dispersed. This fact makes it very difficult to reach definitive conclusions about some of the topics discussed in this thesis. Nevertheless, the present writer has tried to carry out as thorough a research as possible in the records filed in the military archives of Madrid, Segovia and Avila.

Another primary source are the works written by the military men themselves. These can be either professional essays or personal reminiscences. Unfortunately, there are not many memoirs of military men, and those which deal with events before 1936 (Martínez de Campos, Cordón, Franco Salgado-Araujo) are not very informative on professional matters, although they are useful to know the career conditions of junior officers in the early decades of the twentieth century. As regards contemporary essays, some of the most interesting ones are those focused on the discussion of the problems of army organization and those of the officer corps, and their range of views goes from moderate reformism (e.g. Gallego) to heated criticism (e.g. Cebreiros, who also wrote under the pseudonym of El Capitán Equis). The works on professional issues are often tedious due to their highly descriptive nature, but they provide snippets of information which help to build a picture of Spanish military thinking during this period.

Besides contemporary essays, the research for this thesis has relied much on the professional periodicals. The use of this source must be careful, because there were differences in the character of professional journals. There were official journals and journals privately published by military men. Most periodicals used for this writer's research on the period from 1899 to the mid-1910s, when only the artillery and engineer corps had journals of their own, were private journals. Since they were not official publications, it can reasonably be assumed that their contributors could voice personal views on professional matters with few restraints, if any. In turn, the official journals (La Guerra y su preparación and the Memoriales of the arms of the service) have been the essential periodicals from the late 1910s to 1936 because all the private publications had disappeared by 1920. The views expressed in La Guerra y su preparación can often be assumed as fully or near coincidental with the official ones, since this journal was edited by the General Staff. The corps' Memoriales seem to have been somewhat more open-minded in relation to their contributors' views. Finally, a mention must be made of the existence of political-military periodicals, although their value as a source of professional information is limited. The present writer, indeed, limited himself to a selective sampling, which provided some fruit with the 1908-1909 issues of La Correspondencia Militar.

When dealing with the professional essays and periodicals, the researcher must be careful in assessing the value of their contents, since he or she will often find contradictory views on many topics. Nonetheless, after extensive surveying, the present writer thinks it possible to identify at least major streams of military opinion, although there is no way to assess accurately

the support they got within the military.

4. Organization of the thesis and areas of research.

The thesis has been broadly arranged in a chronological order. Although some topics must be tackled before 1899, this year has been chosen as a starting point because it marks a significant milestone in the history of Spain and her army. The defeat in the war against the United States (1898) meant the end of the old Spanish empire and its overseas commitments, and the start of a slow but definitive decay of the Restoration political-military balance.

Chapter 1 surveys Spain's civil-military relations in the Restoration and the Spanish officer corps' social background until the mid-1910s in order to assess how influential these factors were in preventing the Spanish army from implementing institutional arrangements for its professional modernization. Chapter 2 deals with the internal problems caused by corporate rivalries and tackles the question of how these rivalries affected the Spanish military's professionalism during this period.

The following two chapters study the way the Spanish military coped with the most significant development of warfare in the 1899-1914 period: the increase of firepower on the battlefield. Chapter 3 examines the reactions within the Spanish military to the tactical problem stemming from the increase of firepower by analysing the evolution of infantry tactical doctrine and its discussion in the Spanish army. Chapter 4 surveys how the machine gun fitted the Spanish military's intellectual framework by the time the introduction of this weapon took place, and how this affected tactical doctrine. The argument of these chapters turns around the infantry tactical doctrine, given that the infantry

bore the burden of fighting in the 1909 campaign and that the introduction of the machine gun was to affect mainly infantry tactics.

Chapter 5 surveys the political-military events from the mid-1910s to 1936, the military reforms that they brought about, and their effects on the officer corps' professionalism, and then it proceeds with an analysis of the reforms of military education in 1927 and 1932 and how innovative these reforms were.

Chapter 6 surveys the Spanish army's assimilation of the transformations in warfare brought about by the First World War, focusing on how much this conflict affected the evolution of Spanish military doctrine from the late 1910s to 1936 and the thinking on major unit organization - a process which led to the development of a new model of major unit: the composite brigade. Chapter 7 surveys the views expressed in the professional literature and the official regulations in order to analyse how the Spanish army coped with mechanization and theories of armoured warfare during the 1920s and 1930s, and the development of its own doctrine on mechanization up to 1936.

Chapter 8 is an extension of the three preceding chapters to the Civil War, since it surveys the development of some of the issues discussed before 1936. The first part of the chapter surveys how much pre-war features weighed on officer training and promotion during the war years; the second part compares the organizational effectiveness of the republican army (which adopted the composite brigade as its basic major unit) with that of the nationalist army, and assesses which factors affected the performance of both side's major units; and the third part surveys how effective was the use of armour in the republican and nationalist armies. Given

the amount of published and archival sources, this writer's research has not been comprehensive and the chapter must be seen as a probe on topics which (excepting perhaps the training of officers) have usually been left outside the historiographical mainstream hitherto. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this chapter - although its conclusions are not definitive - will enlighten the issues addressed and will show the usefulness of bearing in mind the Spanish military's pre-war professional background.

The thesis can also be read in a two-tiered way. One of the tiers (Chapters 1, 2 and 5) surveys the problems of the professional core (the officer corps) of the army and the attempts to reform it. It is the background of the picture which the reader must bear in mind when reading the other chapters. Since there is a lot of literature on related topics, these chapters re-arrange much evidence provided by other scholars in order to offer a critical analysis of it, stressing those issues more influential on the Spanish officer's professionalism.

The other tier (Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8) forms a series of case studies on significant military professional issues of the first four decades of the twentieth century. Here there is more primary evidence and this writer hopes to have been able to unearth 'new' facts or, at least, to shed more light on issues scarcely researched.

The present writer realizes that, due to the limitations in primary sources, the conclusions about the issues addressed by the thesis probably fall short of fulfilling the expectations the latter raised. Nonetheless, there remains the fact that, so far as this writer is aware, no other academic work dealing with this subject has been written before. It is hoped that the contents of

this thesis will shed new light on issues scarcely surveyed by scholars and will encourage further research.

1.- THE SPANISH MILITARY UNDER THE RESTORATION UNTIL 1916.

The professional evolution of the Spanish army cannot be studied in isolation from other contemporary issues affecting Spain's military as a whole. This chapter surveys the background of civil-military relations during the Restoration regime, whose developments led to the military's increasing weight in politics after 1900, and which were influential in the problems surrounding the creation of a general staff. Finally, the influence of career conditions and prospects on the professional core of the army - the officer corps - will be analysed in the last part of the chapter.

1. Politics, society and the military, 1875-1916.

a) From political-military appeasement to military defeat.

The restoration of the Spanish Bourbon dynasty - which had been overthrown with Queen Isabel II in 1868 - was achieved through a bloodless military rebellion. The pronunciamiento of General Martínez Campos on 28 December 1874 closed a period of unstable government which started in 1868 and culminated in the first republican experience (1873-1874) in the history of Spain. But Martínez Campos' action was not exceptional, because, after the end of the war against Napoleon (1808-1814), political life in Spain had featured the meddling of military leaders supporting political factions.

The usual way to meddle was the pronunciamiento. Pronunciamiento (pronouncement) comes from the declaration (asking for a change of cabinet or its policy) with which a local commander began a sort of military revolt, often bloodless. If a significant number of garrisons followed his example, thus reflecting the lack of

military backing of the politicians in power, the pronunciamiento was successful. An essential feature of the pronunciamiento until the Restoration was that it did not reflect the political views of the military as a whole. It promoted the interests of political factions and parties, which used sections of the officer corps as spearheads in the pursuit of power. This kind of intervention ended with the First Republic. The first prime minister of the Restoration, the conservative liberal politician Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, set up a parliamentary regime in which two 'dynastic' parties (the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party) would take turns in power after peaceful elections. There were no major ideological differences between these parties, since both grouped the politicians supporting the dynasty and the prevailing social order, and Cánovas' system was actually based on oligarchic rule, local bossing and election rigging. Nevertheless, this arrangement gave stability to the country for the next quarter of a century. Once the dynastic politicians accepted common rules of the game, their calls for help to army leaders disappeared as a cause of military intervention.[1]

Another reason for the military's unwillingness to take direct action in politics after 1875 was the rise of a new generation of generals, who had witnessed the events of 1868-1874. These generals helped in bringing the latter events to a close after seeing the effects of leftist and radical liberal ideologies, and becoming apprehensive at anything resembling a threat against the social order.[2] Moreover, the Restoration cabinets pursued a policy of conciliation through the granting of promotions and sinecures (e.g. a seat for life in the Senate) to the generals most loyal to

[1] Daniel R. Headrick, Ejército y política en España (1866-1898) (Madrid, 1981), pp. 134-9, 215-9; Carlos Seco Serrano, Militarismo y civilismo en la España contemporánea (Madrid, 1984), p. 14.
[2] Seco, p. 194.

the regime.[3] On the other hand, the military were allowed a limited participation in political debates through legal channels. Thus a number of politically reliable officers were elected deputies for the lower parliamentary house or could write political articles.[4]

It was also fortunate that King Alfonso XII (Isabel II's son and the first monarch of the Restoration) displayed a noticeable military spirit: he liked to dress in uniform and attend army ceremonies and manoeuvres. This helped to accommodate the military within the regime. However, he was not a soldier-king in the Prussian way: his constitutionalist ideas prevented him from thinking of the army as a political instrument.[5]

Although they ran into much self-interested opposition within the army and the parliament, there were attempts at military reform during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[6] In 1882, War Minister General Arsenio Martínez Campos (military head of the pronunciamiento of December 1874) set up a centre providing a common military education to all the officer candidates: the Academia General Militar (General Military Academy) of Toledo. However, it was closed in 1893 due to alleged financial reasons and the pressure of the artillery and engineer corps to preserve their interests. Martínez Campos also set up in 1882 the escala de reserva retribuida (paid reserve list), a separate officer list formed by non-commissioned officers promoted to commissioned rank without passing through the military academies. Although this somewhat odd arrangement was devised to prevent conflicts with the

[3] Stanley G. Payne, Politics and the Military in Modern Spain (Stanford, 1967), p. 45; Headrick, Ejército, p. 221.
[4] Headrick, Ejército, pp. 221-2; Payne, Politics, p. 45.
[5] Payne, Politics, p. 45-6.
[6] The following overview of these reformist policies is based on Miguel Alonso Baquer, El ejército en la sociedad española (Madrid,1971), pp. 184-9; Headrick, Ejército, pp. 236-40; and Seco, pp. 207-17.

academy graduates, the latter still displayed mistrust towards the new reserve officers.

The boldest reformist proposals of the period were made by General Manuel Cassola, the war minister in 1887-1888. Three of them concerned conscription, the general staff and the staff officers. One of these proposals was the abolition of exemption from military service through payment in cash or through the purchase of a substitute - though conscripts posted by the draft to overseas garrisons could still use these means to get an appointment in the home army. Another proposal would turn the Higher Advisory War Board - the army council - into an embryonic general staff, by assuming new tasks. A third proposal would suppress the staff corps (Cuerpo de Estado Mayor), which would be replaced with a general staff service, based on the German model, with the staff officers remaining in the lists of their corps of origin. Altogether Cassola's reforms aimed to adapt the army more closely to the successful Prussian-German example. But they also threatened too many vested interests, whose protection guaranteed the regime's stability, so the reforms were condemned to be rejected, as they were. However, their inherent soundness was proved by the fact that most of them were adopted piecemeal over the next fifty years.

The military system of the Restoration was shaken by the Desastre (disaster) of 1898: the loss of the last colonial territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific.[7] Independence movements had started armed conflicts in Cuba (1895) and the

[7] This account of the 1895-1898 wars is based on Payne, Politics, pp. 69-82. For a more detailed study of the background and the events of the war against the United States, see Joseph Smith, The Spanish-American War: Conflict in the Caribbean and the Pacific, 1895-1902 (London and New York, 1994). The figures about the army's pre-war strength (including the para-military police forces) are this writer's guess; they are based on official data (which, in relation to the enlisted men, provide only theoretical figures and are unreliable until 1891) taken from Headrick, Ejército, pp. 272, 277.

Philippines (1896). The government made a great effort to crush the rebels: 140,000 regular troops were serving in Cuba in 1896 (during the 1880-1895 period, an approximate average of 38-43,000 out of 137-163,000 troops might have been garrisoning overseas territories). By early 1898, the Philippines had been almost totally pacified through a blend of military action and bribes to rebel chiefs, whereas the Cuban rebellion had reached a military stalemate.

However, the Spanish presence in these territories clashed with the interests of the United States, which started flexing its muscles as a great power. The casus belli was the alleged Spanish responsibility for the blowing up of an American warship visiting a Cuban harbour in early 1898 (later inquiries pointed to an internal explosion). On 25 April 1898, the United States declared war on Spain. From the strategic point of view, the war was decided once the Spanish naval squadrons were destroyed in Cavite (Manila Bay) and Santiago de Cuba. American expeditionary forces landed in Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Cuba, but there were no major land clashes (excepting the fight in front of Santiago de Cuba, which is surveyed in Chapter 3). A ceasefire was concluded by August and the peace treaty was signed in December. Spain gave Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the United States and Cuba became an independent state.

The colonial campaigns revealed a poor professional ethos in the Spanish officer corps: despite the disproportionate number of under-employed officers at home, non-commissioned officers and (after a shortened training) very young officer candidates had to be commissioned to officer the units in the colonies. The officers' reluctance to serve in a tropical campaign was understandable in view of the appalling logistical organization of

the Spanish army. The conscripts sent overseas in 1895-1898 (more than 200,000) had no alternative and paid a heavy price: in the Cuban conflict, 2,159 Spanish troops were killed in action and more than 53,000 were killed by disease.

b) <u>The aftermath of the Disaster</u>.

The Spanish army entered the twentieth century with the painful scar of the <u>Desastre</u>. In the aftermath of the war there was a search for who was responsible. The self-sacrifice of the rank and file was not in doubt but the competence of the command was. A senator, Count of Almenas, expressed his affection for the 'victims of the war, these soldiers who [returned] to the Fatherland worn down by sickness and bullets...' but he lambasted their commanders, who had not known how or had not been able 'to lead them to victory or even to an honourable defeat.'[8]

Although the army hierarchy had allowed the neglect of Spain's military organization and preparation during the two previous decades, it would be unfair to attach all the blame to the field commanders, faced with poor logistical support from home governments and corrupt colonial administrations. Actually the inner moral cohesion of the officer corps did not seem to crack after the defeat in the Spanish-American War. According to the scholar Miguel Alonso Baquer, after the <u>Desastre</u>, the Spanish military did not feel any resentment against commanders who tried to do their best to use the means available in an effective way. Moreover, the cabinet in Madrid was equally accountable for the strategic conduct of the war of 1898. What had been a disproportionate aim was the goal of the war itself. And the blame for this lack of balanced judgement remained at the political

[8] Quoted in Payne, <u>Politics</u>, p. 84.

level.[9]

Furthermore, since the stability of the Restoration regime was dependent to a great extent on not upsetting the corporate interests and status of the military, searching for scapegoats within the army would have been dangerous for the government. The army was allowed to carry out an inquiry of its own, which left the hierarchy unscathed. With their face saved this way, generals and politicians shelved the subject after 1900.[10] Moreover, once the last overseas territories were lost, there were no foreseeable conflicts in sight and the regime could return to business as usual. The Spanish military certainly had no interest in foreign adventures.[11]

The colonial disaster also highlighted the flaws of the Restoration regime, which was not overlooked by an officer corps embittered by a feeling of public scorn. Indeed many - if not most - officers became resentful of a political system serving the interests of the wealthy oligarchy alone. Moreover, the government increasingly used army troops to preserve order in urban areas against working-class unrest after 1900. The officer corps did not like to do the police's work; it only accepted such a task because it saw left-wing doctrines and regional nationalist movements (such as the Catalonian one) as threats to the social order and the integrity of the fatherland. Against such developments, some military essayists proposed the regeneration of the country through the indoctrination of military values in conscripts, who, once released, would spread those values to the rest of the

[9] Miguel Alonso Baquer, 'La guerra Hispano-americana de 1898 y sus efectos sobre las Instituciones militares españolas', Revista de Historia Militar (hereafter RHM), XXVII, 54 (January-June 1983), p. 130; José Antonio Olmeda Gómez, Las fuerzas armadas en el Estado Franquista. Participación política, influencia presupuestaria y profesionalización, 1939-1975 (Madrid, 1988), pp.97-8.
[10] Payne, Politics, pp. 83-6.
[11] Alonso Baquer, 'La guerra Hispano-americana', pp. 128-9.

population; thus the army would become 'the school of the nation'. However, their proposals never turned into reality.[12] To complicate things, a new monarch, King Alfonso XIII, was to use the military - unlike his father - as a card in the political game after 1902. As a result of all this, the army's voice became louder in political matters.[13]

The reduction of the army budget was a main goal of military policy in the 1900-1910 period. However, its achievement was complicated by the officer surplus left by the 1895-98 colonial campaigns. Since the government was unable to find a satisfactory way out of the army for unnecessary officers, the savings were made at the cost of overall standards of preparation for war.[14] Thus, during the 1900-1910 period, the army and naval officer corps felt that the armed services were the victims of the politicians' peacetime budgets, whereas the politicians believed that the poor professionalism of the Spanish officers turned them into insatiable wastrels of large budgets.[15] In view of the reciprocal mistrust between military men and politicians, it is hardly surprising that the relationship between the military and the civilian authorities was increasingly tense.

These distrustful civil-military relations could not help but have repercussions on the preparation for war. In 1907, a report of the Fourth Military Region (where only 60,000 out of 130,000 reservists reported to the annual review in 1906) complained of the lack of cooperation of the local authorities in issues related to mobilization and reservists, a complaint repeated by the

[12] Alonso Baquer, Ejército en la sociedad, pp. 196-7; Payne, Politics, pp. 89-91. A good example of the military literature on the army as 'the school of the nation' is Joaquín Fanjul, Misión social del Ejército (Madrid, 1907).
[13] Payne, Politics, pp. 91-3.
[14] Ibid., pp. 86-8.
[15] Alonso Baquer, 'La guerra Hispano-americana', p. 143.

Second and Fifth Military Regions.[16]

c) The military's return to politics, 1905-1909.

The tension between the military and the civil authorities turned after 1905 into a tendency of the military to cast into doubt the supremacy of civil power and challenge the government. The first significant exhibition of this tendency was caused by Catalonian nationalism. The defeat of 1898 stimulated the nationalist movements of the Basque provinces and Catalonia; their most radical demonstrations were tolerated by the government, but the military considered these nationalist displays unacceptable. There were some small incidents between nationalist supporters and army officers in the period 1900-1905. The government took no action; this actually was to encourage future indiscipline of the military.

In November 1905, the Catalonian nationalists won a local election in Barcelona. A Catalonian satirical weekly used this event to publish a cartoon which made fun of the military by comparing the army officers with the civilians, who were able to achieve victories. The response of the army came on 24 November 1905: in the evening, about two hundred officers of the Barcelona garrison stormed the presses of the weekly and the editorial offices of another nationalist newspaper. Once the news became known, the officer corps as a whole expressed its support for the action. Moreover, the military urged the government to pass legislation to put attacks against the army in the press under the jurisdiction of military courts.

[16] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 2ª Región Militar, 1907, Servicio Histórico Militar, Archivo Central, Sección Primera: Colección Adicional de Documentos (hereafter SHM-CAD) 8/2; Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 4ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/4; Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 5ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/5.

The cabinet tried to face up to the military pressure. However, the army hierarchy - including War Minister General Weyler - thought that this attitude could bring about a major breach of discipline in the junior officers (who were the main instigators of the military protest). So the senior commanders closed ranks with their subordinates in order not to lose control of the situation. King Alfonso XIII displayed his support for the military as well, therefore forcing Prime Minister Montero Ríos to resign. A new cabinet headed by Segismundo Moret presented to the parliament, by early 1906, a bill which satisfied the army's demands. The bill, allowing the military to put on trial civilians whose writings in the press had allegedly offended the fatherland and the army, was passed on 20 March 1906 and became commonly known as the Law of Jurisdictions. Although it was not to suppress totally the criticism against the military in the press, it meant a serious limitation of the right to freedom of speech, guaranteed by the 1876 constitution.

The whole affair had shown the weakness of the dynastic political elite as well. Unable to find a peaceful solution to the conflict between the Catalonian nationalists and the military, the civilian executive and legislative powers finally bowed to the stronger side.[17]

The next major involvement of the military in domestic politics (the so-called 'Tragic Week' of Barcelona) was due to the outbreak of the Melilla campaign in the summer of 1909 (which is surveyed in Chapter 3).[18] The War Ministry called up reservists in order to bring some expeditionary units to war strength. In Barcelona, the

[17] This account of the 1905-1906 events is based on Carolyn P. Boyd, La política pretoriana en el reinado de Alfonso XIII (Madrid, 1990), pp. 25-31; Seco, pp.235-44.
[18] This account of the 'Tragic Week' is based on Boyd, Política pretoriana, pp.35-7; Seco, pp. 244-53.

order affected several hundred reservists of classes released several years earlier. Most of these reservists were family men from the city's working class quarters. This fact and the memories of the suffering caused by the colonial wars of 1895-1898 combined to unleash a popular protest. This turned into a series of violent riots and strikes in the last week of July, later known as 'the Tragic Week' of Barcelona. The final toll was 130 casualties in the army and police forces, and around a hundred rioters dead plus another five executed after being court-martialed. Besides increasing the mutual mistrust of the military and the working classes, these events reinforced the officer corps' belief that, due to the ruling politicians' incompetence, the army was the only safeguard against social disintegration.

Thus, after a quarter of a century of quiescence, the military returned to the political stage after 1900. The combination of a foreign policy and military fiasco (the Spanish-American War and the loss of the overseas colonies) and the rise of new political and social forces broke the stability of the Restoration regime. Unwilling to undertake reforms and lacking a social base wide and strong enough, the ruling elite had to resort to the army as its pillar, but in the process the military gradually stopped being the government's servant. The dynastic politicians could still keep a rein on the officer corps as long as the top ranks of the army hierarchy preserved their authority over their subordinates. But when the latter no longer trusted the former, as was to happen in 1917, the government became a hostage of the military.

2. Military policy and the beginnings of the general staff.

a) The state of the army: the problems for military planning.

There were some reforms in the army force structure after 1900.

By 1913, the standing major units were fourteen infantry divisions, one cavalry division, three light infantry brigades and three separate cavalry brigades, distributed amongst eight peninsular military regions (territorial commands equivalent to an army corps area). The Balearic and Canary Islands were separate commands. There were also garrisons in the enclaves in Northern Morocco (one infantry brigade in Ceuta and two infantry brigades in Melilla). [19] Due to Spain's increased involvement in Morocco from 1909 on, these garrisons were reinforced by expeditionary units, whose strength varied according to the intensity of military operations.

However, most of the home army was only a paper force, because many units were understrength, ill-trained and ill-equipped. In fact, some regiments seemed to have no reason to exist other than providing appointments for the underemployed officer corps. After 1900, the average peninsular infantry regiment had in peacetime two standing battalions (four companies each) plus the cadre for another one to be formed with called-up reservists; the total strength was about 500 officers and men (a regiment at war strength was 3,000-strong).[20] A report of the Fifth Military Region stated in 1907 that the small numbers of enlisted men in the units and the frequent releases of conscripts made impossible any effective training at battalion and regimental level. The report argued that the disbandment of a number of regiments would increase the strength of the remaining units to 500 troops per infantry battalion and 100 troops per cavalry squadron; these levels of strength would make more feasible a realistic unit

[19] Anuario Militar de España (hereafter AME) 1913. For the evolution of the force structure, see the annual issues of AME.
[20] Historia de las fuerzas armadas, 5 vol. (Saragossa, 1983), II. 43-4; Eduardo Gallego Ramos, Proyecto de reorganización y mejora del ejército de tierra (Guadalajara, 1905), p. 32. A graduate of the General Military Academy and commissioned in the engineer corps, Gallego (1873-1959) served in the Philippines (1895-1898) and Melilla (1909-1910), and reached the rank of brigadier.

training.[21]

The financial constraints did not affect personnel only. They caused excessive delays in the construction of fortifications: for instance, Fort Alfonso XII and La Sagueta battery (two strongpoints for the defence of the Pyrenees border) were still unfinished after thirty and twenty years of building, respectively.[22] The state of many army barracks was deplorable.[23] The First Military Region pointed out in 1907 that, besides the lack of adequate training grounds near the barracks, the cavalry could not train on rainy days because there were no roofed riding schools.[24] And the replacement of outdated material could take a long time: the engineer corps' magazines in Granada stored, in 1907, sapping tools made in 1848.[25]

Besides its deplorable material state, Spain's army lacked clear guidelines to conduct its professional affairs. The Spanish military policy of the first years of the century neglected planning for the two kinds of conflict in which the army could be engaged in the near future: a colonial campaign in Northern Africa and intervention in a war between European coalitions. The former perhaps was neglected due to the desire to forget the sad experiences of Cuba and the Philippines, whereas the latter went against the isolationist attitudes of the military. Certainly those generals who were war ministers in this period and had fought in the overseas wars of 1895-1898 (Weyler, Linares, Luque) did not want to change this state of affairs: they preferred to erase memories of the past and accommodate to the neutralist policy of the government, even if this harmed the modernization

[21] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 5ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/5.
[22] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 5ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/5.
[23] The reports of the 1907 army review, filed in SHM-CAD 8/1 to 8/8, provide many examples.
[24] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 1ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/1.
[25] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 2ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/2.

of the army.[26]

The ministers' short terms in office did not favour a steady direction of military affairs either. From 1900 to 1917 there were twenty five changes in the ministerial chair, which amounts to an eight months' interval on average between each change. In 1905-1906 the portfolio changed hands six times.[27] Although some ministers were in office several times, their alignment with cabinets with different priorities in military policy hampered sound planning (conservative politicians were interested in the organization of the higher planning and command establishments; liberal ones focused instead on issues related to compulsory military service).[28]

b) <u>The political problem of the General Staff</u>.

The problem of short-lived ministers was made worse by the lack of an efficient professional body able to make up for the ministerial turmoil. The issue of the supreme command of the army in peacetime was passed over by the Constitution of 1876 and by the 1878 and 1889 army acts. The terms of the 1889 act assigned the everyday administration and conduct of the army to the war minister. So the minister actually became the commander-in-chief (leaving aside the king, who was the nominal supreme commander of the armed forces), but this also implied that organizational authority over the military was tied to political-administrative authority, and therefore to the repeated swings of Spanish political life. Nonetheless, the 1878 act set up a <u>Junta Superior Consultiva de Guerra</u> (Higher Advisory War Board), whose advisory mission partially resembled the role of a general staff. General

[26] Alonso Baquer, 'La guerra Hispano-americana', p. 144.
[27] Calculation based on data taken from <u>AME</u> 1935.
[28] Alonso Baquer, <u>Ejército en la sociedad</u>, p. 235.

Cassola tried unsuccessfully to enlarge the board's role by allocating it some responsibilities for war planning, training and recruitment.[29]

The War Board disappeared in 1904, when War Minister General Linares, who had realized the need for an institution for war planning, at last set up the army's General Staff - Estado Mayor Central (EMC) - on 17 July 1904, through an act whose content concerning the EMC was developed by a decree on 9 December 1904.[30] The General Staff had executive power and its chief could order territorial commanders to carry out the decisions taken by the EMC (the war minister only intervened when the orders were so important as to need the king's signature for their approval).[31] Nevertheless, the EMC soon became entangled in a conflict with the War Ministry apparatus over their respective responsibilities. Who would assume the conduct of operations in wartime, the minister or the chief of general staff? Would the War Ministry become reduced to a sort of administrative manager of the General Staff as in Germany? Politicians certainly desired the war minister's supremacy, which assured them a tighter control of the army.[32] But the EMC could also be their ally against a war minister's policy. Comandante Beta, a reformist military essayist, disagreed with the General Staff's role as an instrument for military reorganization, separate from the ministry. It was true that the EMC should provide a continuity of approach to military reform, but actually the argument of the need for such continuity was used by the

[29] Fernando Puell de la Villa, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis de la Restauración. Las Juntas Militares de Defensa', in Mario Hernández Sánchez-Barba and Miguel Alonso Baquer (eds.), Las fuerzas armadas españolas. Historia institucional y social, 8 vol. (Madrid, 1986), V. 91-2.
[30] Colección Legislativa del Ejército (hereafter CLE) 1904, No. 135 and No. 240 (articles 20 to 36); Alonso Baquer, Ejército en la sociedad, p. 237.
[31] Puell de la Villa, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 92.
[32] Alonso Baquer, Ejército en la sociedad, p. 237-9. On a contemporary case of military doctrine affected by malfunctioning of the high command and general staff system, see Douglas Porch, 'The French Army and the Spirit of the Offensive, 1900-14' in Brian Bond and Ian Roy (eds.), War and Society. A Yearbook of Military History (London, 1975), pp. 121-2, 124-8.

parliament as a way to hold back the war ministers' reformist proposals on military organization issues.[33] Thus, according to Comandante Beta, the General Staff turned into a tool the politicians used 'to tame ministers as if they were yearlings'.[34]

The concept of a self-contained body in charge of the reorganization of the army, separate from the traditional bureaucracy of the War Ministry, was not accepted unanimously. It was even argued that the General Staff was unconstitutional, because its head could usurp the role of commander-in-chief. The supporters of the General Staff denied any contradiction with the constitution. The decree of December 1904 defined the General Staff as a branch of the army's administrative framework without any organizational link with the other major branch - the War Ministry. Its mission was the preparation for war and the supervision of the staff officers' training, and it was subordinate to the war minister. Therefore the minister's final authority was not lessened by that of the chief of general staff. This meant no change in the spirit of the constitution, which designated the king and the war minister as the heads of the army. But this subordination was also the key to the problems affecting the General Staff, as the scholar Aguilar Olivencia points out. The General Staff, in order to fulfil its function properly, had to limit such subordination. This was necessary in a country like Spain, where even successive war ministers of the same political party in power could support very different views on the same military issue.[35]

[33] Comandante Beta [pseud. of José García Benítez], Apuntes para historiar tres años de reformas militares (1915-1917) (Madrid, 1917), pp. 21-5. García Benítez (1872-1948) was a student in the General Military Academy and commissioned in the engineer corps; he saw service in the Philippines (1895-1898), the War Ministry's military cabinet (1915) and the General Staff (1916-1918); he reached the rank of brigadier.

[34] '[D]omar Ministros como si fueran potros.' Ibid., p. 24.

[35] Mariano Aguilar Olivencia, 'La opinión pública militar', in Hernández Sánchez-Barba and Alonso Baquer (eds.), V. 156-9.

c) Early organization of the General Staff.

Standing for the General Staff did not necessarily mean agreement with the shape it had taken in Spain. Capitán Equis, a highly critical essayist, thought that the Estado Mayor Central was badly organized for the tasks expected from a general staff. After a reform in 1906, its structure and responsibilities from this year to 1912 - when it was dissolved - were as follows:

-Secretariat: administration, staff corps personnel affairs, War College, military history, technical studies on communications and signals (staffed by eighteen officers).

-First Section: organization and operations - i.e. strength and territorial deployment of units, training of officers and enlisted men, allotment of conscripts and reservists, mobilization, war planning, military transport (twenty officers).

-Second Section: foreign intelligence (nine officers).

-Third Section: ordnance and supply (nine officers).

-Fourth Section: fortifications and military buildings (eight officers).

-Fifth Section: map-making and publishing (two officers).[36]

The bulk of duties usually assigned to a general staff were put together in a single section. Thus only twenty out of sixty six officers were employed in true staff work. Excepting those in the Second Section, the rest dealt with administrative matters or technical studies on ordnance and fortifications more appropiate for inspectorates or technical staffs.[37] Capitán Equis also complained that this mixture of military and technical matters led to the EMC officers coming from too many backgrounds:

> Grouping in the same centre so hetereogeneous a personnel [without common training and criteria to deal with military problems] - and all this reinforced by the background of prejudices, rivalries and confluency of ambitions, which divided the officers [of the different

[36] AME 1912.
[37] El Capitán Equis [pseud. of Nazario Cebreiros], El problema militar en España. Apuntes para un estudio sincero y al alcance de todos, 2 vol. (Burgos, 1916-1917), I. 51-2.

corps] - meant...bringing down the best initiatives...[38]

Moreover, the chiefs of the general staff were not above the political struggle because, according to Capitán Equis, 'there were conservative chiefs and...liberal ones; not only this, there were [after the name of contemporary generals] luquistas, linaristas, polaviejistas, primorriveristas...'[39] That is, the appointment and the performance of the chiefs of general staff were not foreign to the play of political and personal sympathies which weighed so much on the top of the military hierarchy.

d) Disbandment and rebirth of the General Staff.

The General Staff was abolished by War Minister General Luque in late 1912, by the time of the parliamentary debate on the budget for 1913. Luque argued the need for thinning down the army's bureaucracy as a justification to remove this branch of the military structure. His critics, though admitting that the EMC had become an unworkable organization, reckoned that the solution should be a reform, instead of disbandment.[40] But the disbandment also was a drastic way of resolving the political conflict about the General Staff's alleged incompatibility with the terms of the 1876 constitution and the final accountability of the minister to the parliament.[41] Luque created at the same time a general staff section within the War Ministry. The section was headed by a brigadier and divided into three bureaus (staff corps personnel, War College and military attachés; manpower management, ordnance stocks, transport and communications; mobilization, planning and

[38] 'Agrupar en un mismo Centro a personal tan hetereogeneo... -y reforzado todo esto por el fondo de prejuicios, rivalidades y concurrencia de ambiciones que separa a la oficialidad...- era...dar en tierra con las mejores iniciativas...' Ibid., I. 52.
[39] '[H]ubo jefes conservadores...y liberales; menos todavía que eso, los hubo luquistas, linaristas, polaviejistas, primorriveristas...' Ibid., I. 54.
[40] Puell de la Villa, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 92, V. 101.
[41] Beta, pp. 55-6.

operations), manned by eighteen staff corps officers.[42]

Comandante Beta reckoned that the trouble with the EMC was the political-military authorities' desire for cure-alls which solved at once all the problems of the army. Thus he criticized the creation at one stroke of a full-fledged general staff, instead of pursuing a policy of gradual enlargement from a smaller establishment, better suited to the Spanish army's needs.[43]

Comandante Beta's views were a result of his experience in General Echagüe's military cabinet. Echagüe, war minister in 1913-1915, announced a project of military reform to the parliament in December 1914. Given the ambitious range of his reform plans, and the lack of a department in the War Ministry able to undertake their preparation in detail, Echagüe set up a military cabinet in the ministry in late April 1915.[44] Comandante Beta saw in this body a sort of general staff in embryo. Nevertheless, this organization had allegedly aroused ill-will among those who had interests in the restoration of a large general staff (especially the staff corps officers).[45]

General Echagüe's project, among many others reforms, also created the new Army Supreme Council (Consejo Superior del Ejército), which would include former war ministers and provide steadiness in military policy and planning. The solution of professional problems raised by the preparation for war would be the task of the re-born General Staff, turned into an advisory branch without any command and administrative responsibilities. The conservative and liberal parliamentary groups broadly agreed on the contents of the reforms. However, at the time of their

[42] CLE 1912, No. 254.
[43] Beta, pp. 20-2, 62-4, 66-7.
[44] Puell de la Villa, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 103.
[45] Beta, p. 64.

discussion in late 1915, the conservative Prime Minister Dato insisted on passing first a much-contested bill on the reduction of the retirement age for officers. Facing strong opposition on this issue, Dato resigned on 6 December 1915. The fall of his cabinet also paralysed any further discussion of Echagüe's reforms. The reasons for Dato's odd conduct remain obscure, but they had little to do with military policy, given the previous consensus on the reforms.[46]

The next cabinet, headed by the liberal politician the Count of Romanones, included General Luque as war minister again. And Luque, who disbanded the EMC in 1912, brought this body back to life on 24 January 1916.[47] Nevertheless, the new General Staff had only a consultative role (a feature which caused criticism from some sections of the military) and its relationship with military units in peacetime was limited to inspection duties.[48] The EMC was to be headed by a captain-general or a lieutenant-general (who would perform as commander-in-chief of the field army in wartime, or as its chief of staff if the king took command) and a deputy chief of general staff. Its organization was as follows:

- Secretariat (three officers).
- First Section: organization, mobilization and training (twelve officers).
- Second Section: operations and military communications (eight officers).
- Third Section: ordnance and war industry (five officers).
- Fourth Section: statistics and requisition (five officers).
- Fifth Section: fortifications and foreign intelligence (six officers).[49]

The missions assigned to the Fourth Section reveal a greater concern about the problems of economic mobilization (a consequence of the experiences of the First World War), but uniting

[46] Puell de la Villa, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 103-7.
[47] CLE 1916, No. 22.
[48] Equis, I. 83; Puell de la Villa, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 107.
[49] CLE 1916, No. 22.

intelligence matters and technical studies in the same section still seems an oddity in the General Staff's functional division.

Luque also presented another reform bill in the autumn, in order to make up for the EMC's lack of executive power. The mission of giving stability to military policy was assigned to the Junta de Defensa Nacional (National Defence Board). This had been created in 1907 and was formed by the prime minister, the war and navy ministers, the army and navy chiefs of general staff, and former prime ministers. The board would set the guidelines on which the General Staff would develop the war minister's initiatives on organizational issues. Once having finished its work, the General Staff would send the project back to the war minister, who would carry out its implementation. Although the bill did not raise any significant political discussion, Luque's reform did not succeed in being passed due to the adjournment of the parliament in February 1917.[50] And after this date, military policy in Spain was to be dominated by the crisis of the juntas de defensa (which will be surveyed in Chapter 5).

The turbulent early life of the General Staff was hardly surprising given the involvement of the Spanish army's hierarchy in politics and the uneasy civil-military relations under the Restoration. Though the dynastic politicians realized the need for a professional body in charge of organizational and planning matters, they were suspicious of anything resembling a core of autonomous military power (though, due to their inflexibility in coping with social and political changes, the dynastic parties became increasingly dependent on the military). But such a fear was unfounded to some degree. The refusal of the Restoration cabinets to make any reform seriously affecting military vested

[50] Puell de la Villa, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 92, V. 107.

interests was successful in integrating the top of the army hierarchy (the so-called 'political generals') within the regime. As a result, senior generals became so bound to the dynastic parties' politics that they did not worry about preserving enough professional autonomy to keep military policy on a steadier basis. War ministers yielded to political interests, and a strong General Staff could not help being an embarrassment in this situation. But, at the same time, limiting the power of the General Staff deprived this body of its raison d'être.

Hence the nature of the Restoration political-military establishment was a major factor in preventing the implementation of military reforms which increased the Spanish army's effectiveness for warfare. Due to the excessive interdependence between the ruling politicians and the military, only a deep change of Spain's political order could open the way to the necessary reform of the Spanish army. The alternative spur for a reform of the army - a major military defeat, such as the French one in 1870 - was too remote, due to Spain's keeping out of the arena of international politics.

3. The officer corps: the professional consequences of its social background.

a) The transformation of the Spanish officer corps after 1808.

The officer corps of the Spanish army, like many other European armies, was recruited mainly from the scions of the nobility by the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, the war against Napoleon (1808-1814) broke the traditional structure of the army. Many officers of the old army died in the fighting or were captured by the French in the early years of the war. The Spanish authorities therefore opened the officer corps to candidates whose proven ability on the battlefield or educational qualifications

made up for their lack of noble blood. On the other hand, the French invasion, in overthrowing the government system of the Ancien Regime, encouraged the development of a new government in non-occupied Spain, whose policies were based on the liberal political ideology. One of these policies was the creation of an army which valued professional competence, instead of lineage, as the basic requirement for the officer commission.

Thus the Spanish officer corps was no longer reserved for the nobility by 1814. Moreover, after the end of the Napoleonic wars, a number of former guerrilla leaders (many of peasant origins) got regular commissions, which diluted even more the surviving aristocratic elements. The campaigns against the independence movements in Spanish America and the civil war of 1833-1840 between the liberal government and the carlists (supporters of the absolute monarchy under a different branch of the Bourbon dynasty) brought into the ranks of the officer corps more candidates of non-aristocratic origins. Despite the attempts by anti-liberal governments to maintain the proofs of lineage as an essential requirement for a commission, the definitive rise to power of liberalism in the 1830s led to the suppression of such proofs in 1836.[51]

Though a number of aristocrats still pursued the military career, a large part (about 60 per cent) of the officer commissions were given to candidates with a middle or lower class background by the mid-nineteenth century. This fact also had to do with the increasing importance of self-recruitment (i.e. the increasing numbers of new officers whose fathers were already military men), which was the most remarkable feature of the social

[51] For a brief survey of the transformation of the Spanish officer corps in Julio Busquets, see El militar de carrera en España, 3rd edition (Barcelona, 1984), pp. 48-66.

evolution of the officer corps during the nineteenth century, as the research of the historian Fernández Bastarreche has shown.[52]

Education in military academies was comparatively expensive, but the sons of officers were entitled to advantages in admission and financial benefits. Thus many officers were encouraged to direct their male offspring towards a military career. The rise in self-recruitment had important consequences for the relationship between civilian society and the military from 1874 onwards. The officer corps, which had been open after 1808 to any candidate possessing gifts and ambition, became again a sort of closed, self-renewing caste by the end of the nineteenth century. Kinship links with other professional groups grew weaker during this process, and the Spanish officers ended up thinking of themselves as a separate group, apart from the rest of society.[53]

b) <u>Professional concerns of career officers</u>.

The life of the average officer in the Spanish army during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was distinguished by financial difficulties and professional dissatisfaction. The roots of this situation lay in the surplus of officers caused by the civil wars and political upheavals from the 1830s to the mid-1870s. The problem was that, once the military need had disappeared, the government was unable to find a suitable way to release the officers who had no usefulness in peacetime. Since the retirement pay was low, few officers were ready to leave the army prematurely. The only solution lay in long-term policies which reduced the strength of the officer corps through a process of natural wastage (for instance, by slowing down promotions).

[52] Fernando Fernández Bastarreche, <u>El ejército español en el siglo XIX</u> (Madrid, 1978), pp. 8-12, 103-23.
[53] Busquets, pp. 63-6; Headrick, <u>Ejército</u>, p. 78.

Unfortunately, new conflicts broke out before the benefits of such policies could be reaped. Thus the policy pursued by the Restoration cabinets after 1879 was ruined by the colonial wars of 1895-1898: the refusal of many officers to fight overseas obliged the government to commission in a hurry large numbers of students of the military academies (after abridged training courses) and non-commissioned officers.[54]

The officers' unwillingness to leave the army was due to their social origins and status. The average officer came from a family of the middle classes (which most military families can be assimilated to in social terms), whose sources of income were often jobs in the civil or armed services. The backwardness of the Spanish economy did not offer many chances to make a living in industry or business. So, unless they had got substantial private means, officers were very reluctant to give up the safety offered by a place on the payroll of the state. Moreover, the officers' living standards improved after a rise in pay in the 1880s.[55]

Besides the economic issues, the other major concern in an officer's career was promotion. The Spanish army had no uniform policy to promote officers until the last decade of the nineteenth century. To simplify, it will suffice to say that the artillery and engineer corps (the so-called facultative corps) had adopted seniority as the only way of promotion (closed list), whereas the general corps (infantry and cavalry) kept a system which opened their officer lists to selective promotion by merit (though many times merit was political rather than military) in addition to seniority. Seniority was slower than selection as a path to high rank but it prevented arbitrary promotions. The difference in

[54] Headrick, Ejército, pp. 75-6; Payne, Politics, p. 76.
[55] Headrick, Ejército, pp.85-7.

promotion systems caused bitter disagreements among the arms of the service during the nineteenth century. A compromise was reached at last in 1889: all the officers would be promoted in peacetime by seniority up to the rank of colonel and would get merit promotions in wartime (although artillerymen and engineers could exchange war merit promotions for a special pensioned medal - the María Cristina Cross).[56]

c) The 1898 defeat and its consequences.

The military defeat of 1898, which highlighted the flaws of the Spanish military establishment, did not foster reform in depth. There was no single culprit for the decay of the army. It was true that the military had displayed a shameful image when many members of the oversized officer corps refused to fight overseas. But, on the other hand, the dynastic politicians and their social supporting groups were too comfortable with the existing military system to undertake any serious reform, and their criticisms after the defeat were no more than a search for military scapegoats to erase their remorse.[57]

The explanation for this situation lay in the interdependence of the Restoration's civilian power and the army. The latter was the shield of the ruling elites against the new political and social groups (e.g. left-wing parties and trade unions, and the Catalonian nationalist movement) which threatened the traditional foundations of the Spanish government. Despite its dislike of

[56] Ibid., pp. 88-97. The artillery, engineers and staff corps were called "specialist" because their officers received more technical and scientific education than those of the infantry and the cavalry (corps which were known as the 'general arms'): Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europeo-americana (hereafter Enciclopedia Espasa), 80 vol. plus biennial supplements (Madrid, 1908 onwards) sv 'Arma', VI. 428; ibid. sv 'Cuerpo', XVI. 1017. The system of promotion combining seniority and merit was called 'open list' (escala abierta) to differentiate it from the 'closed list' (escala cerrada): ibid. sv 'Escala', XX. 588.

[57] Fernando Fernández Bastarreche, 'El Ejército', in Historia General de España y América, 25 vol. (Madrid, 1981-1992), XVI-1. 674.

civilian politicians and unwillingness to perform the police forces' role, the officer corps loathed still more what it saw as threats to the social order and unity of the fatherland. The dynastic politicians, in turn, refrained from any professional reform which damaged the vested interests of the military section of their middle class clientele (one of the pillars of the Restoration's political system). Thus this interlocking of interests meant that the rise of military professional standards was tied to political reform.[58]

The ruling politicians' fear of losing their middle class support deterred them for a long time from implementing an obvious solution, adopted in other European countries, to the problem of the surplus of regular officers: the creation of a reserve of civilians trained as officers during their compulsory military service, who could be called up in wartime and released after the conflict was over. The educated middle classes were the natural suppliers of this kind of officer at that time. But the Spanish middle classes were actually exempt from military service (with the consent of the ruling elites) until the early 1910s: a payment in cash or the purchase of a substitute avoided any service with the colours. Thus conscription affected the illiterate lower classes alone. The 1912 military service act suppressed exemption from military service by means of cash payment or substitution: every able-bodied man could be drafted into the army for a three-year term. However, those who paid a certain amount and proved a satisfactory level of military training could be released after a few months' service. So the main burden of conscription still fell on the lower strata of Spanish society. The 1912 act provided for the creation of a reserve of officers (the 'complementary list',

[58] Carolyn P. Boyd, Praetorian Politics in Liberal Spain (Chapel Hill, 1979), p. 26; Payne, Politics, pp. 89-90.

whose members had to satisfy certain educational requirements and pay for their personal equipment), but it was not very successful because most of the would-be candidates among the educated middle and upper classes preferred to take advantage of the short-service terms as enlisted men.[59]

The colonial disaster of 1898 worsened the professional prospects of the officer corps. The demobilization left only 79,000 enlisted men in the colours; they were officered by a cadre 21,500-strong (there were also 530 general officers).[60] This meant a ratio of enlisted men to officers of 3.6:1 (and Fernández Bastarreche suggests that in practice the ratio was nearer to 2:1). In contrast, the ratio in other European armies was between 17:1 and 24:1.[61]

The effects of such a situation for the preparation of the army and for the military careers were appalling. Officer salaries absorbed 58 per cent of the 1900 army budget, which devoted only 9.5 per cent to ordnance. About a decade later, 35 per cent of the budget was still spent on the salaries of officers (Germany and France devoted only half of this percentage).[62]

Reductions of officer personnel were the only solution in the long term, but they could not be carried out resolutely by the government because they harmed the vested interests of the officer corps, and no cabinet wished to fall out with it. The military academies (which had been closed after the 1898 war) opened their doors again in 1902 under the pressure of officers whose sons aspired to a military career. The alleged reason was the shortage

[59] Headrick, Ejército, pp. 101-4; Payne, Politics, pp. 99-101; Michael Alpert, La reforma militar de Azaña (1931-1933) (Madrid, 1982), pp. 49, 95-6; Gabriel Cardona, El poder militar en la España contemporánea hasta la guerra civil (Madrid, 1983), pp. 8-9.
[60] Headrick, Ejército, pp. 272, 276-7.
[61] Fernández Bastarreche, 'El Ejército', XVI-1 657; Headrick, Ejército, p. 75.
[62] Fernández Bastarreche, 'El Ejército', XVI-1. 657; Boyd, Praetorian Politics, p. 32.

of subalterns. Such a shortage was real, but it was due to the eagerness for fast promotions in the early years of an officer's career, which depleted the junior ranks. Spanish lieutenants needed only nine to twelve years' service to reach the rank of captain (a Prussian lieutenant needed from sixteen to eighteen years), and infantry officers often became majors when they were about forty years old (French officers on a fast-track career could reach this rank at forty but others had to wait until they were forty nine years old). But the Spanish officers' careers stagnated afterwards due to the surplus of field officers in the army lists (in contrast, the German army's personnel policy cut down the number of officers suitable for field grade, but their careers speeded up thereafter). This eagerness for promotion also reduced the usefulness of the policy of amortization of vacancies. The government decided in 1899 to suppress one out of every two vacancies of the same rank (so that there would be one promotion only). The junior officers did not welcome the decision because it meant they must stay longer in the lower paid ranks, and the unrest forced the war minister, General Weyler, to reduce the rate of amortization to 25 per cent of the vacancies.[63]

The failure of policies to cut substantially the number of underemployed officers (8,000 out of 18,000 officers had no active appointment in 1906) also meant that any rise in salaries was out of the question. This could not help fostering the interest of officers not to stay too long in the junior ranks, which therefore caused the need for a steady flow of new junior officers.[64]

d) <u>The officer corps' reluctance for military reform</u>.

The roots of the officer corps' resistance to a significant

[63] Headrick, Ejército, p. 76; Boyd, Praetorian Politics, pp. 27-8.
[64] Payne, Politics, p. 98; Boyd, Praetorian Politics, p. 28.

reform in the way personnel policy was managed did not lie in their alleged fear of a deterioration of the army's military effectiveness. Actually such a reform would have been the base for an improvement of the army as a whole. The reality was that the Spanish officer corps had become something rather close to one more branch of the state bureaucracy, whose corporate vested interests seemed to be more important than professionalism. The average officer acted in practice as if his career was a way to earn one's living instead of a professional vocation, and any reform meaning cuts in personnel was rejected by arguing that this generation did not have to pay for the mistakes of the previous ones. This situation was tolerated by the regime's political leaders in order not to lose the support of this influential clientele.[65]

Comandante Beta saw this military problem as a derivation of the country's overall problem with the middle classes. Spain's limited economic development did not offer many employment opportunities to these classes. Since the doors of industry and commerce were so narrow, they looked for and hoarded jobs in the government branches; the army was no exception. Moreover, as another military essayist, Colonel Modesto Navarro, pointed out, education in the military academies was comparatively short and offered a sure wage at its end, unlike university education (which was rather expensive as well). Comandante Beta concluded that the Spanish army was no more than a productive cow which fed good, educated citizens whose military spirit had become impoverished, if it ever existed.[66]

[65] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, p. 27.
[66] Beta, pp. 18-9; Modesto Navarro, 'Lo moral en lo militar', Revista de Infantería, I, 2 (July-December 1901), pp. 71-3. Navarro (1853-1913) joined the army as a conscript private, later got a regular commission in the infantry, and became a major-general; he took part in the campaigns of Cuba (1875-1878, 1895-1898) and Morocco (1909-1912) and was the director of the infantry section at the Central Firing School (1904-1909).

This self-interested concept of the military career was not new in 1900. Probably, it was already noticed in the 1880s. A professional journal article reproduced the comments of General Galbis, the first commandant of the General Military Academy, on the 'advantages' offered by the different corps in that period. An officer of military administration (quartermaster corps) found cushy, danger-free appointments more easily. The engineer officer could use his professional education (and thrive) in both military and civil life. The staff corps offered a fast track to the highest ranks. The artillery officer alternated regimental service and quieter appointments in army factories. The cavalry offered as a compensation the joys of horsemanship. Finally, the infantry officer found only routine barracks duty, rubbing shoulders with the rank and file, and the prospect of being killed because of the command's incompetence.[67]

The self-interest was also partly a consequence of the lot of the Spanish officer after being commissioned. For instance, Second-lieutenant (later Lieutenant-general) Franco Salgado-Araujo went to an ordinary provincial garrison in his first appointment after graduating at the Infantry Academy in 1911. He found that the strength of the company in which he was to be a subaltern was about fifty men (the theoretical strength of one platoon was around eighty men). He felt a great disappointment: 'For this reality, I told myself, did I spend three years studying the campaigns of Hannibal, the Great Captain [Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba], Napoleon, the Franco-Prussian and Russian-Japanese Wars, logistics, tactics of the three fighting arms, and so on?' Franco Salgado-Araujo decided to apply for an appointment in one of the units operating in Morocco in order to satisfy his professional

[67] X., 'El espíritu de la juventud militar', Revista Técnica de Infantería y Caballería (hereafter RTIC), XIII, 2 (July-December 1903), pp. 32-3.

eagerness.[68] However, many others conformed to the atmosphere of inactivity.

The poverty of professional life was not made good by the joys of a dazzling social life. Though the military academy educated him to get on with the upper strata of society, the tight salaries confined the officer to the quarters of bleak barracks and modest boarding houses. Unless he came from a wealthy family, an officer could not permit himself to haunt the select social circles. As the scholar Mariano Aguilar Olivencia sums it up: 'Under the glitter of the military uniform, a bleak history of tears, grief and poverty was hidden.'[69]

The bulk of the officer corps drew annual salaries ranging from 2,500 pesetas (lieutenants) to 5,500 pesetas (majors) by the beginning of the century. After deducting the income tax (from 5 to 18 per cent of the basic salary), these amounts were enough to cover the essential expenses of the average officer and his family - despite the lack of housing benefits and subsidized foodstores for the military. Nonetheless, they were far from allowing classy living standards. A captain at forty, on the eve of promotion to major, earned 3,500 pesetas per year plus an additional amount of 600 pesetas after ten years in his current rank. But a civil servant of an equivalent rank could drew from 3,500 to 4,000 pesetas, whereas a bank clerk earned about 3,700 pesetas after twenty years in his job. So the average officer had lower middle class earnings, while he was supposed to live as a gentleman.

[68] '¿Para esta realidad, me decía, he pasado tres años estudiando las campañas de Aníbal, del Gran Capitán, de Napoleón, la guerra franco-prusiana y la ruso-japonesa, logística, táctica de las tres armas, etc, etc?' Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mi vida junto a Franco (Barcelona, 1977), p. 23. Franco Salgado-Araujo (1890-1975) was a cousin of General Francisco Franco Bahamonde, nationalist generalissimo (1936-1939) and Spain's head of state (1939-1975); his professional career from the mid-1920s to the early 1970s developed mainly as his cousin's military assistant and secretary.

[69] 'Bajo el brillo del uniforme militar se ocultaba una sombría historia de lágrimas, dolores y miserias.' Aguilar Olivencia, 'La opinión pública militar', V. 147.

Actually the Spanish officer devoted much of his home budget to maintaining such a gentlemanly appearance and behaviour, since he was anxious to display his self-image in front of subordinates and civilians.[70]

Some posts brought extra earnings (e.g. appointments to the regiments in Morocco meant a 50 per cent rise in pay, and officers in the Pyrenees border garrisons got better salaries as well). Nevertheless, most officers could not ask frequently for new appointments. On the one hand, the expenses of moving to another garrison were not paid by the army and became a heavy burden for officers who could hardly make ends meet on their salaries. On the other hand, the concession of appointments was subjected to the whim of ministerial authorities. The Spanish army lacked fixed criteria to appoint officers at the beginning of the twentieth century: any vacancy could be awarded by the minister's free will, and the senior officers of the branches (secciones) of each corps in the ministry were also very influential in the posting of personnel. Comandante Beta thought that this state of affairs fostered patronage and the loss of self-esteem within the military. An officer who had no patron in high places could even be posted compulsorily to a different garrison in order to create a vacancy needed to satisfy the application of a protégé. According to the artilleryman Antonio Cordón, only 'select' officers were appointed to the Horse Artillery Regiment (the so-called 'artillery hussars') due to its 'aristocratic' life style and its close relationship with King Alfonso XIII. This situation ended in May 1917 thanks to a sensible decree of War Minister General Aguilera, which regulated the concession of appointments

[70] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, pp. 32-4, 310 n 28; Puell de la Villa, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 90. See also an overview of the social and economic situation of the officer corps based on the contemporary military press in Aguilar Olivencia, 'La opinión pública militar', V. 166-78.

from the rank of second-lieutenant up to that of colonel according to the strict seniority of the applicants. There would be only a few exceptions, such as appointments to the General Staff and War Ministry, teaching staff of the military academies, and military attachés.[71]

Since only a limited number of officers could ease their financial difficulties within the army, the rest had no alternative but to look for relief outside it. Officers in reduced pay situations ('substitute' and involuntary unassigned') and unpaid supernumerary officers could work full-time in civilian jobs without losing their seniority in the army list. Artillery and engineer officers could get ready profits from this situation because their scientific-oriented military education fitted easily with the civil economy's demands. However, few infantry and cavalry officers found suitable jobs, and most of them limited themselves to work in part-time civil jobs (for instance, teaching in private preparatory schools for the military academies).[72] General de Santiago, who inspected the Infantry Academy in Toledo in the autumn of 1907, remarked on the effects of an order recently issued (5 October 1907) banning officers in active service from teaching in preparatory schools, unless they applied for leave as unpaid supernumerary officers. The result was that the teaching in the preparatory schools of Toledo had to stop due to the shortage of staff. And this mean a financial loss for the officers, since even full-time teaching in those schools did

[71] Gallego, Proyecto de reorganización, p. 28; Puell, 'Las fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 94-6; Boyd, Praetorian Politics, p. 33; Beta, pp. 47-8; Antonio Cordón, Trayectoria (Recuerdos de un artillero) (Paris, 1971), p. 65. Commissioned in the mid-1910s, Cordón (1895-1969) left the service under Azaña's volunteer retirement decree (1931); he rejoined the army on the republican side in the Civil War and held senior staff appointments on the Andalusian and Aragonese fronts; posted to the army general staff, he was dismissed by Minister of Defence Prieto under allegations of promoting communist influence within the republican army (Cordón was indeed a member of the Spanish Communist Party), but he later became Ministry of Defence undersecretary (1938) and chief of staff of the eastern army group, and was raised to general officer rank in February 1939.
[72] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, p. 33.

not make good the loss of army pay.[73]

e) A review of the Spanish officer corps in 1907.

General de Santiago's remarks were included in one of the reports of the inspection review carried out in 1907. They were submitted by the captain-generals of the military regions (the general officers commanding these territorial commands) and display an interesting picture of the situation of the officer corps by this year.

The report of the First Military Region noted the sad impression caused by the struggle of most officers to maintain a proper appearance with their pay alone. If a rise in salaries was not possible, the abolition of the income tax for state employees would at least remove the need for usury. The Fourth Military Region included in its report a list of officers who were not recommended for an appointment as commanding officers: thirteen out of nineteen had got into debt problems.[74] The limited salary maybe was not the only cause of indebtedness for some officers. Gambling proliferated in Spain in the early years of the twentieth century, and the officers were not immune to its temptation - as the airman Hidalgo de Cisneros witnessed.[75]

The report of the Fifth Military Region reckoned that the root of the indebtedness and poor morality of many officers lay in their formative years in the military academies. The report recommended the implementation of compulsory boarding, since those

[73] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 1ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/1.
[74] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 1ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/1; Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 4ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/4.
[75] Ignacio Hidalgo de Cisneros, Cambio de rumbo, 2 vol. (Barcelona, 1977), I. 56, I. 89-90. After being commissioned in the quartermaster corps in order to join the army air service (there was not direct entrance to it), Hidalgo de Cisneros (1896-1966) took part in the Moroccan campaigns of the 1920s (achieving the dubious glory of pioneering aerial gas bombing - which was almost useless against the Riff natives) and became the commander-in-chief of the republican air force in the Civil War.

officer candidates who lived outside the academy walls did not get used to the essential disciplinary habits. The boarding system was reckoned essential to inculcate deeply the military customs and ethos and spare the officer candidates' parents from fears and expenses.[76]

The report of the First Military Region also denounced the fact that some officers were in the habit of obtaining temporary releases from the service, or appointments such as posts in conscription offices (zonas de reclutamiento) or military courts - far from the close supervision of their commanders - in order to improve their own qualifications. For instance, a cavalry officer who worked as a military judge had got good qualifications despite his propensity to get into debt.[77] This situation had been denounced a few years before by Captain Eduardo Gallego, who stated that the lack of any stimulus and supervision caused a deplorable average level of professional proficiency. Personal records were filled up year after year with no criteria other than the officer's punctuality and health. And if assessing the ability of an officer in a regiment was difficult because of this procedure, the assessment was even more difficult if the officer was appointed in a bureaucratic post.[78]

It was too easy to obtain temporary releases, which removed the officers from professional service for too long (a staff corps lieutenant-colonel in the First Military Region reached this rank despite spending most of his career years in such releases, either for his private business or to fulfil his duties as deputy or senator in the parliament). The report of the Fifth Military Region stated that the supernumerary status, created to have a

[76] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 5ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/5.
[77] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 1ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/1.
[78] Gallego, Proyecto de reorganización, p. 18.

reserve of officers, had lost its purpose. The supernumerary officers became so devoted to their private business that they forgot their military professional expertise. Even so, they did not lose seniority in their rank, could get the San Hermenegildo Cross (an endowed award for long service) and were entitled to retirement pay (or a widow's pension for their family), just like those who had performed active service for all their military career.[79]

The reports of several military regions also observed the difference between the age suitable for every post in the service and the actual age of the holders. Many young officers were appointed to conscription offices and reserve units (outfits which only performed bureaucratic duties), while officers advanced in years still performed regimental service.[80] This had repercussions for the training of the fighting units. An observer of the manoeuvres in the Sixth Military Region in 1902 remarked that many infantry company commanders and subalterns were too old, and fast combat movements were slowed down due to their inability to command their soldiers from a leading position.[81]

The report of the Fifth Military Region displays several cases of physical or professional inability in serving officers that the careless personnel policy had allowed. A senior administrative officer held his post for a year though he was paralysed and unable to speak; an infantry lieutenant-colonel who could not walk had been promoted three times without performing regimental service; one major on temporary release turned down a proposal to

[79] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 1ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/1; Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 5ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/5.
[80] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 2ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/2; Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 4ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/4; Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 7ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/7.
[81] Domingo Arráiz de Conderena, 'Las prácticas y ejercicios militares de la 6ª Región en octubre de 1902', RTIC, XIII, 1 (January-June 1903), p. 562.

command two companies because he considered himself 'ignorant' (lego); and, faced with the same proposal, several majors 'started to quake' (se pusieron a temblar) - one of them asked for six months in order to get ready. The list was completed by an infantry colonel, suffering from a hernia, who could not ride; a major unable to walk due to a softening of the marrow; and three 'mad captains' (capitanes locos).[82]

This report found it strange that these cases were ignored by their immediate commanders. The report attributed such neglect to a misplaced kindness, which conceded too many highly positive comments in the individual proficiency reports. In the Fifth Region, this practice was frequent in the infantry, the cavalry and, to a lesser extent, the artillery corps (on the contrary, the engineers and the staff corps were sparing with such comments). For instance, officers whose annual records included rebukes for incompetence saw their ability later described as good. The reports of the Sixth and Seventh Military Regions also commented on the lack of reliability of the personal qualification reports.[83]

The reports of the other territorial commands did not mention this problem. This suggests that their captain-generals maybe consented to such practices and turned a blind eye to officers whose professional performance was less than satisfactory. The cases recorded in the Fifth Military Region were perhaps the oddest ones, but then it seems fair to wonder how many cases of less exaggerated professional decay existed. Surveys of officers' personal records and the army lists (a task which is outside the

[82] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 5ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/5.
[83] Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 5ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/5; Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 6ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/6; Revista de Inspección al Ejército: Capitanía General, 7ª Región Militar, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/7.

scope of this writer's research) maybe would make possible a quantitative analysis of the degree of professional commitment of the Spanish officer corps. According to Comandante Beta, who took the data from the 1913 edition of the Anuario Militar de España (the military yearbook), 850 out of 1,836 infantry field officers (46 per cent) held bureaucratic posts in conscription offices and reserve depots or were on temporary releases.[84]

The consequence of the underemployment and the poor professional and financial prospects was an unsatisfying personal life for the average officer of junior and middle rank. This produced frustration and over-sensitiveness to criticisms from the civilians, who thought the military were not worth the money spent in the War Ministry budget. The civilians were partly unfair, but the officer corps - in opposing to personnel cuts - was responsible for the situation as well.[85]

This survey of the social background reveals a very inadequate environment for the achievement of good professional standards. This was partly a consequence of external factors (such as the restless internal and external politics of Spain during the nineteenth century) which too often obstructed any sort of long-term military policy. But, on the other hand, the actual behaviour of the officer corps itself shows a comparatively limited professional ethos, due to a too self-interested concept of the military career (which appeared easily in underemployed officers) and the acquiescence of the civil authorities, which rather than cutting away the useless elements of the military, left untouched corporate vested interests to safeguard their own political ones.

[84] Beta, pp. 203-16.
[85] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, pp. 34-5; Aguilar Olivencia, 'La opinión pública militar', V. 171.

2.- SPANISH MILITARY CORPORATISM IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.

External factors (such as financial constraints, or the cabinets' awkward military policies) were not the only explanation for the Spanish military's professional weaknesses. The officer corps itself also had much to do with the professional decay of the military. The army suffered from its branches' corporate factionalism. This fostered a petty-minded, parochial spirit which, far from promoting cooperation, strengthened distrust and hindered the efforts at military modernization. This chapter surveys such corporatism, which took root during military education and affected even the professional elite of the officer corps: the staff officers.

1. The educational divide: the system of separate academies.

a) Spanish military education from 1800 to 1893.

The evolution of officer training during the nineteenth century was closely affected by the upheavals of Spain's wars and politics.[1] At the beginning of the century most of the officer candidates of the Spanish army of the Ancien Regime were trained in the regiments, excepting those of the artillery and engineer corps, who went to their respective specialist schools, located in Segovia (artillery) and Alcalá de Henares (engineers). The French invasion of 1808 threw the whole system into disarray, like the rest of the military organization. During the war against Napoleon (1808-1814), the Spanish authorities set up several improvised military schools. Three of them (for infantry and cavalry officer candidates) survived after the war and, in addition to the

[1] This summary is based on Fernández Bastarreche, Ejército español, pp. 48-55; and Busquets, pp. 72-80.

restored artillery and engineer schools, carried on training officers under King Fernando VII's first period of absolute rule (1814-1820) and the years of liberal government after a military revolt in 1820.

The military schools were closed in 1823, when Fernando VII got back his absolute power and undertook a thorough reform of the army. A new, single military academy - the Colegio General Militar (General Military College) - was opened in Segovia in 1825. Its syllabus was five years long, and the students came from the wealthy nobility, in order to guarantee the loyalty of the future officers. However, its work was harmed by the First Carlist War (1833-1840) - which brought about a demand for officers which could only be met through new, additional officer schools - and by criticism of its unified teaching for all arms despite their different requirements. The occupation of Segovia by carlist forces caused the closing of the military college in 1837. Nevertheless, the policy of a single centre stood up for a while and the Colegio General - now with a three years syllabus - was set up again in Madrid (1842) and moved later to Toledo (1846).

After a few years, the idea of separate specialist training for each arm finally prevailed and a decree dated 5 November 1850 set up a system of separate academies for staff corps, infantry, cavalry, artillery and engineers. Alongside the academies, the system of regimental officer cadets - which was abolished and restored several times after 1814 - went on training a number of officers until its final abolition after the Third Carlist War (1872-1876).

The idea of a single military academy was revived by War Minister General Martínez Campos, who ordered the creation of the

Academia General Militar (General Military Academy) in 1882. Admission was through examination and, after 1890, a secondary education diploma was required for entrance; candidates had to be fifteen years old at least and younger than eighteen. The officer candidates took basic officer training for two years and, after passing the second year, went to the infantry or cavalry academies (where they graduated after one year), or followed a preparatory course for the staff corps, artillery or engineer academies. Those who passed the course were commissioned as second-lieutenants before joining their specialist school.

The General Military Academy aspired to the improvement of the internal harmony of the Spanish officer corps by diminishing the tense relationship among the branches of the service. A major flaw of the system of separate academies was its failure to provide a corporate spirit for the officer corps as a whole. Each academy doubtless impressed an indoctrination of general military values and attitudes in its graduates. But this was not enough to overcome the inward-looking corporatism of the branches of the service, eager to advance their own interests. Since the officer candidates of a general academy had to live together and received a common indoctrination, it was easier to develop sympathetic attitudes to fellow-officers of other corps and reduce social differences. The esprit d'armée would prevail over the esprit de corps and its petty corporate interests. Thus, it was hoped, the officer corps would turn into a more homogeneous, stable group under the Restoration regime.

The General Military Academy was not as successful as intended. The syllabus did not reconcile sufficiently the educational requirements for the different arms. Since the artillery corps had responsibilities for the manufacture of weapons and the engineer

corps was in charge of military buildings, they required more scientific training than the infantry and the cavalry. Different syllabi - according to the arm the students aspired to - were introduced. A candidate for a 'specialist' corps (artillery, engineers or staff corps) also took a risk of being forced to join an undesired arm because of a lack of vacancies in his original choice. These factors, plus a desire to cut military expenses, were influential in the closing of the academy by War Minister General López Domínguez in 1893. But the pressures of the specialist corps, eager to preserve their touchy esprit de corps and recover the whole training process of their officers, must also be taken into account. And López Domínguez, an artilleryman himself, was doubtless receptive to their arguments.[2]

b) The reform of 1893.

The decree (dated 8 February 1893) which ordered the closing of the General Military Academy also laid down the new organization of military education. Officers would be trained in separate corps academies again: infantry (Toledo), cavalry (Valladolid), artillery (Segovia) and engineers (Guadalajara). There would also be a staff college in Madrid. The introduction to the decree pointed out that the system of separate academies allowed the numbers of annual admissions to be settled accurately according to the needs of each corps.[3]

The reform abolished an unhealthy practice as well. Candidates coming from the rank and file were entitled to several benefits (a higher age limit, exemption from secondary education, subsistence grants, free preparatory studies). In practice, many sons of families with some private means (including large numbers of

[2] Headrick, Ejército, p. 240.
[3] CLE 1893, No. 33.

officers' sons) who aspired to the military academies joined the army as volunteer privates. Since the taxpayer's money paid for the studies of those officer candidates who came from the rank and file, volunteering had become a simple (and much abused) way to get a commission free. This had spoiled a measure thought to assist deserving enlisted men. After 1893, the benefits were to be limited to conscripts alone.[4]

The decree established that the aspirants should have completed secondary education studies and had to prove their proficiency in specific subjects through examinations. Those who got the best marks in the examinations would be admitted. However, as long as they got the minimum marks, orphans and brothers of military men killed on campaign would be admitted besides the approved number of students.[5]

The duration of the syllabus was three years (infantry, cavalry and military administration) or five years (artillery and engineers). The last two years in all of them had to be attended in the academies, while the previous years could be studied privately and passed through examination alone. The students of the cavalry, artillery and engineer academies would be external; the decree does not clarify if there was a compulsory boarding regime for the infantry students. After passing the third year, the students would be commissioned as second-lieutenants.[6] They were promoted to lieutenants after graduation at the academy (specialist corps) or after two years of service (infantry and cavalry).[7] The graduates of the specialist corps' academies also got a professional degree equivalent to an university degree in

[4] Ibid. (Introduction).
[5] Ibid. (articles 7 and 8).
[6] Ibid. (articles 10, 11, 13 and 17).
[7] Busquets, p. 81.

engineering (industrial engineering for artillery officers and civil engineering for engineer officers).[8] This degree was very useful when an officer looked for an accompanying job out of the army - a not uncommon case.

The requirement for a full secondary education (bachillerato) was not demanded in practice by the military authorities, which were content with a few subjects from the first four years of secondary education.[9] On the other hand, the case for suppressing the General Military Academy based on the alleged benefits of allowing the candidates to choose their arm at the outset was rather contradicted by their freedom to sit the examinations in several academies in the same year: for instance, Antonio Cordón was examined (and got admission) in the infantry, artillery and engineer academies in 1911.[10] If many candidates really wished to become officers in a specific arm alone, they should have no reason to apply for admission to other corps at the same time. In short, the 1893 reform did no more than suppress the intermediate step of the General Military Academy, and it could still produce officers allegedly dissatisfied with their arm of the service.

However, if this kind of dissatisfaction was so great a problem as the partisans of separate academies avowed, the fact is that the affected officers adapted themselves to their situation remarkably well, or at least did not complain aloud. A plausible explanation lies in the motivation of candidates for the military career. As has been shown in Chapter 1, the economic safety given by a job on the state payroll was a major incentive (if not the only one) for many middle class candidates to take a career in the

[8] Enrique Ruíz-Fornells and Alfredo Melgar Mata, Organización militar de España y algunas potencias extranjeras, 9th edition (Toledo, 1901), p. 119 fn 2; Busquets, p. 118.
[9] Busquets, p. 80; Cordón, p. 23.
[10] Cordón, p. 23.

army. The effects of such a mind-set on the Spanish army's professionalism were deplorable, and the military academies and their educational system were partly responsible because of their failure to select the right officer material.

c) The criticism of Spanish military education after 1893.

The flaws of the system implemented after 1893 started with the admission procedures, which were unanimously condemned by contemporary critical literature. There was no real inquiry about the family and moral background of the candidates, so the selection depended finally on the examination results alone.[11] The problem got worse due to the limited scope of these examinations, which could not assess the candidate's specific fitness to be an officer, since they only tested his mathematical knowledge.[12] This limitation in content made admission easier for young teenagers whose later performance in the academy proved their physical or intellectual handicaps (and even their limited basic education: for instance, spelling mistakes were frequent amongst the students).[13]

The syllabi of the academies were another common target for contemporary critics. Spanish military education was dominated by theoretical studies, whose utility for junior officers was doubtful, to say the least. On the other hand, professional matters such as the essential tasks of junior command and field service were relegated to a secondary status, behind scientific and mathematical subjects. [14] The Infantry Academy, when it had to

[11] Capitán Subrio Escápula, 'Reformas militares', Revista Científico-Militar (hereafter RCM), XXVI (1901), pp. 134-6; for a heated and thorough criticism of the Spanish military academies see also Equis, II. 41-78.
[12] Beta, p. 128.
[13] Revista de inspección, Reformas que se proponen en las Academias y Colegios Militares, 17 June 1907, Archivo General Militar de Segovia (hereafter AGMS) 2/3/123.
[14] Critón [pseud. of Ricardo Burguete Lana], Hágase Ejército. Infantería, Caballería, Artillería. Estudios tácticos al alcance de todos (Barcelona, 1899), pp. 41-4; Efeele, El desastre nacional y los

shorten the training of officers to one year due to the colonial wars of 1895-1898, still kept the higher scientific subjects, while it did not take care of the students' physical fitness.[15] Within this context, the reader may guess which armies Captain Herrera was thinking of when he wrote in his report on the Russo-Japanese War that the Japanese army's officer training lacked syllabi which used up the energy of

> ...the unfortunate group of people who, in some countries, turn up to nourish the officer corps, to the point of turning them into engineers, doctors in science, architects, astronomers, geodesists, and so on; [these are] very respectable professional qualifications, but they are useless for developing leadership skills, getting used to command duties, deploying large masses of troops, being a good sapper or pontonier, or correctly handling a gun, a rifle or a horse.[16]

Moreover, teaching methods were based on rote learning of huge quantities of information from textbooks, without any room for personal work.[17] This sort of education has been reckoned prone to produce a tendency to conformity and uncritical acceptance of orders and established procedures.[18] Perhaps this is the origin of the passive obedience which, according to a contemporary military essayist, prevailed among the Spanish officers during the Melilla campaign of 1909. [19] Several decades later, General Kindelán deplored the lack of initiative displayed by the nationalist army's commanders during the Civil War. According to Kindelán, this was a result of the mental inertia prevailing in the Spanish

vicios de nuestras instituciones militares (Madrid, 1901), pp. 291-5; Gallego, Proyecto de reorganización, p. 17.

[15] Efeele, Desastre, pp. 243-4.

[16] '[L]a desgraciada porción de humanidad que en algunas naciones acuden a nutrir la oficialidad del Ejército, hasta el extremo de que esos oficiales resulten Ingenieros, Doctores en ciencia, Arquitectos, Astrónomos, Geodestas, etc, titulos todos muy respetables pero que no hacen falta ninguna para tener don de gentes, adquirir la práctica del mando, mover grandes masas de tropas, ser un buen zapador o pontonero, manejar bien un cañon, un fusil o un caballo.' Capitán Herrera de la Rosa, Impresiones recogidas de la campaña ruso-japonesa con el ejército del general barón Nogui, p. 19, 30 November 1905, AGMS 2/8/152.

[17] Equis, II. 58.

[18] Corelli Barnett, 'The Education of Military Elites', Journal of Contemporary History, 2, 3 (July 1967), p. 25.

[19] Juan Avilés, 'Enseñanzas de la guerra del Rif', RCM, XXXV (1910), pp. 371-2.

officer corps, whose members were reluctant to think up solutions of their own for operational problems. The Spanish officer had 'an extraordinary fear of responsibility, a desire of being given detailed and precise orders which save him from the duty of thinking things over and having his own criteria.'[20] Most professional officers of both sides during the Civil War had passed through the military academies after the reform of 1893.

The few memoirs which recall with some detail the life in a military academy at that time were written by the artillerymen Martínez de Campos and Cordón. They both reflect the bookish nature of their training. Carlos Martínez de Campos, who entered the Artillery Academy in 1903, recalled those years as endless lessons in the classroom, six hours every day. This burden was lightened by the afternoon gathering with his classmates, in which playing cards often replaced textbooks. Apart from the morning run to be present at the roll call, physical training was reduced to a weekly fencing session, horsemanship during the fourth year, and a march to the firing ranges on some Saturdays. Martínez de Campos did not hesitate to define such a life as absurd for a career soldier.[21]

Antonio Cordón reckoned that the academy's education was unsatisfactory. 'The training of the students for engineering was

[20] '[U]n temor extraordinario a la responsabilidad, un deseo de recibir órdenes detalladas y precisas que le libren del deber de pensar y tener criterio propio.' Alfredo Kindelán y Duany, Mis cuadernos de guerra (Madrid, c. 1947), pp. 207-8. Kindelán (1879-1962) was commissioned in the engineer corps (1899); a pioneer of the Spanish military aviation, he became chief officer of the army air service (1926); a staunch monarchist, Kindelán left the service in 1931, but he returned to command the nationalist air force throughout the Civil War; although he stood for the election of Franco as the nationalist side's head of state, Kindelán asked unsuccessfully for the return of the monarchy in the 1940s and finished his career half-ostracized.

[21] Carlos Martínez de Campos y Serrano, Ayer, 2 vol. (Madrid, 1946-1970), I. 28-9. Martínez de Campos (1887-1975), a graduate of the Artillery Academy (1908) and the staff college (1918), held appointments on the General Staff and as military attaché in Japan and Italy; during the Civil War, he was artillery commander of the nationalist Navarrese Brigades and the Army of the North; he became chief of army general staff in the early 1940s; after holding senior commands (1946-1953), he was appointed military tutor of the future King Juan Carlos I.

actually much more valued...than the specific military training.' The principal, more demanding, subjects were the scientific ones, while the military matters - artillery firing, tactics, and so on - were considered secondary subjects. 'This method...meant that the artilleryman, after finishing his academy years, had limited military knowledge and not very deep and complete civilian knowledge.'[22] Cordón, like Martínez de Campos, was lodged in external accommodation (the boarding regime was established after mid-1914), but he had the opportunity to live for a while in the Infantry Academy as a visiting student in 1913-1914. He concluded that, by contrast with Segovia, life at the Toledo academy was more military, harder and nearer to that of the soldier in the barracks.[23]

In fairness, it is necessary to point out that some of the deficiencies of the military academies mirrored those of the contemporary Spanish educational system as a whole. Theory prevailed in the academic syllabi over practical teachings. And there was an emphasis on the sheer cramming of information, with little or no regard to the benefits of vigorous sports and physical fitness, which were neglected in Spanish society.[24]

The emphasis on science was also seen as detrimental to the indoctrination of military morale and ethos. This could not help being lamented by those military essayists stressing the importance of moral factors on the battlefield. Colonel Navarro complained in 1901 about the young officers coming out of the

[22] 'A la preparación de los alumnos como ingenieros se concedía en realidad mucha más importancia...que a la específicamente militar. [...] Este metodo...conducía a que el artillero, al terminar los años de academia, tuviera escasos conocimientos militares y no muy profundos ni completos conocimientos civiles.' Cordón, pp. 29-30.
[23] Ibid., pp. 25, 37.
[24] Critón, p. 46; León Fernández Fernández, De la enseñanza militar (Madrid, 1907), pp. 32-3; Manuel Espadas Burgos, 'La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y la formación del militar español durante la Restauración', in Temas de Historia Militar, 2 vol. (Madrid, 1983), I. 498-9.

academies: they were well-versed in scientific theory, sometimes to the point of pedantry, but they lacked real military spirit and interest in the everyday details of the profession.[25] A decade later, Ricardo Burguete lambasted an education allegedly oriented to produce cool, rational-minded officers: the heavy mathematical content crushed 'the ardent youthful fantasy, poetical and overwhelming, which makes up the most powerful lever of the warrior.'[26]

What the academies seemed to produce was no more than another class of bureaucrats, without any regard for their real proficiency for military command.[27] This state of affairs was worsened by the shortage of manoeuvres - which prevented the officers from putting into practice and improving their training - and the failure to assess and encourage the officers' professional proficiency during their later careers. Thus, after leaving the academy, many officers limited themselves to reading the tactical regulations before an exercise in order to remember the procedures for carrying out the movements.[28]

d) <u>The lingering idea of a general academy</u>.

The idea of a common centre for the training of officers did not remain completely dead. Eleven years after the 1893 reform, War Minister General Linares - aware that basic officer training should be as standardized as possible for all the corps - decreed,

[25] Navarro, 'Lo moral', p. 65-6.
[26] '[L]a ardiente fantasia juvenil, poética y avasalladora, que constituye el resorte más poderoso del guerrero.' Ricardo Burguete, <u>La guerra y el hombre. Psicología de las tropas</u> (Madrid, 1911), p. 70. A graduate of the General Military Academy, Burguete (1871-1937) was commissioned in the infantry and fought in Cuba and the Philippines (1896-1898), and Morocco (1909-1913), where he later became high commissioner (1922-1924); in the last stage of Alfonso XIII's reign, Burguete displayed republican leanings and his doubtful conduct turned the court martial against republican leaders he chaired in 1931 into a republican propaganda success; he went into retirement after the proclamation of the Second Republic.
[27] Beta, pp. 130, 135.
[28] Efeele, <u>Desastre</u>, pp. 300-6; Gallego, <u>Proyecto de reorganización</u>, p. 18.

on 21 July 1904, the re-opening of the General Military College in Toledo.[29] But this decision was never implemented because of the rapid turnover of cabinets at that time. The cabinet which Linares belonged to left office in December 1904, and, after two short-lived cabinets, War Minister Weyler, through a decree dated 17 August 1905, suspended the implementation of those reforms whose funding depended on a budget plan which had failed to get parliamentary approval.[30] One of those reforms was the General Military College. All the same, a setback like this did not dissuade Captain Herrera from expressing his favourable view of common training for officers, since this was 'the best way...to create the same spirit in all its [the army's] branches...'[31]

Nonetheless, the general academy was not a panacea. As a critic of it pointed out in 1905, the benefits of a common indoctrination and training would be very small if they were not accompanied by a reform of the promotion system, since the current one allowed different promotion speeds in each corps.[32] This fact certainly would continue to cause bitterness among members of the same class.

Thus the officer corps was already a not so united institution when its new intakes entered the academies. Therefore, it is not surprising that the officers later developed parochialism and mutual mistrust which seriously damaged the professionalization of the army as a whole. Moreover, the contents of their training displayed a much-criticized remoteness from the professional

[29] CLE 1904, No. 143; Alonso Baquer, Ejército en la sociedad, p. 237-8.
[30] Diario Oficial del Ministerio de la Guerra (hereafter DOMG), 19 August 1905.
[31] '[E]s el mejor medio...de crear el mismo espíritu en todas sus ramas...' Capitán Herrera de la Rosa, Impresiones recogidas de la campaña ruso-japonesa con el ejército del general barón Nogui, p. 19, 30 November 1905, AGMS 2/8/152; another instance of support for a single academy is Miguel A. Moreno y Alvarez, 'Instrucción y reclutamiento de la oficialidad', RCM, XXXVI (1911), pp. 260-1.
[32] Capitán Subrio Escápula, 'El Colegio General Militar', RCM, XXX (1905), p. 43.

realities of the junior officer's service. Nonetheless, the 1893 organization remained intact for over three decades. There were two reasons for its survival. First, the separate education fitted the exclusive corporate spirit of the specialist corps better than a general academy. Second, this organization suited the vested interests of the officers whose careers (and extra incomes) were closely bound to the teaching in military academies.[33] For this group, the more academies, the better. Even a moderate reformist essayist, Captain Gallego, wrote of officers who sought to get and remain in teaching appointments at any cost because these were a handy way to increase their earnings.[34] As a result, there was no stimulus for any reform from within.

2. The corporate rivalries and their military consequences.

a) A social divide: the reserve officers.

By contrast with the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century, when heavy politicization, factionalism, and a dangerous toleration of insubordination were rampant within its ranks, the Spanish officer corps developed an increased corporate feeling after 1874.[35] But it still fell short of overcoming completely its internal differences in the early years of the twentieth century.

For instance, besides the separate education of the arms of the service (surveyed above) and the professional rivalry among them (which will be discussed below), the Spanish army maintained two categories of regular officers. On the one hand, there were the officers trained in the military academies, who were grouped in the army 'active list' (escala activa). On the other hand, there were the rankers, who formed the 'paid reserve list' (escala de

[33] Equis, II. 43-4, II. 62-3, II. 71-8.
[34] Gallego, Proyecto de reorganización, p. 18.
[35] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, p. 3; Headrick, Ejército, pp. 96-7.

reserva retribuida). The officers of the active list had a middle class background, while the reserve officers, like the rank and file, usually came from the peasantry. In times of military conflicts, the non-commissioned officers often provided the subalterns which the military academies could not. The existence of a separate list for the rankers (called chusqueros in the Spanish military slang) preserved the promotion prospects of the active officers, who also used to get better appointments. With poor salaries and professional prospects, the reserve officers saw themselves as a group discriminated against by social prejudices. For example, the artillery corps prevented the creation of the artillery reserve list until 1908; before this year, artillery non-commissioned officers had to be commissioned in the infantry or cavalry lists.[36] Even so, artillery rankers did not perform any command duty as battery officers, but they were appointed as a rule to the ammunition supply services.[37]

b) The specialist corps' struggle for responsibilities.

The division caused by the way of entering the officer corps was less significant for the latter's internal conflicts than the rivalry among its branches. The artillery and the engineer corps were those whose officers displayed the highest degree of inner cohesion (though most of the evidence used in this chapter concerns the artillery, since they were the largest and most influential of the specialist corps). This cohesion stemmed from the common education in their corps academies and the adherence to a career pattern based on the closed list (that is, seniority promotion).

[36] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, pp. 28, 36. The term chusquero alluded to the alleged large amount of chuscos (the army issue small loaves) which these officers had eaten during their career in the enlisted ranks; another army slang nickname was 'spoon officer' (oficial de cuchara): Rafael García Serrano, Diccionario para un macuto, 3rd edition (Barcelona, 1980), p. 528.
[37] Cordón, p. 51.

A foreign observer, the French journalist A. Houghton, provided a portrait of the artillery corps in the 1870s, which is also valid for the following decades. Houghton pointed out that the artillery officers made up a select network (une espèce de franc-masonnerie aristocratique et sévère), which turned them somewhat into a separate branch from the rest of the officer corps. Zealous to hold their ground, they supported each other like an aristocratic oligarchy and their manner was distinguished, bordering on haughtiness, with the other corps. Such an attitude was allegedly based on higher professional standards, which - according to Houghton - well bore comparison with all the European armies.[38]

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many artillery officers stood for the abolition of merit promotion (at least within the corps). According to Cordón, during the late 1910s and early 1920s, the junior officers of the corps still thought the closed list a small price to pay for securing fairness within the military, and this did not affect the artillerymen's conduct in peacetime or in wartime.[39] In order to satisfy such a desire, the corps board decided in 1891 to collect in an album the signatures of those artillery officers who agreed to give up promotions by war merit. All the officers signed in the album, and from that year on all the new graduates of the Artillery Academy did it as well. The heading of the album was as follows:

> The artillerymen who sign this album want to conserve in the corps and transmit by example to those who will serve in it later, the traditional spirit of honour, union, and fellowship that they received from their forerunners and that led to the glory and prestige that the corps enjoys, both for the well-being of the fatherland and the honour of its members.
>
> And in considering that the closed list is the

[38] A. Houghton, Les origines de la restauration des Bourbons en Espagne (Paris, 1890), p. 13.
[39] Cordón, p. 43.

> indispensable condition for the attainment of such high goals, they resolve to maintain it among themselves, offering on their honour to renounce (through the ways allowed by the law) any promotion within the corps or to a general officer vacancy assigned to it, that is not conceded due to seniority.[40]

The artillery and the engineer corps looked after their cohesion through their own semi-official boards (juntas). The artillery corps organized its central board (Junta Central de Artillería) in 1888. This body also assumed the function of watching over the morals of the artillery officers, and corporate prestige and traditions. Due to this system, fellowship was strengthened and inner resentment disappeared within the corps, which developed a gentlemanly (hidalgo) spirit, fond of tradition and hierarchies, and pleased to record the honours and awards of its members. Perhaps, according to one of its own historians, the corps became too snobbish, thus stirring desires for imitation in the rest of the military as well.[41]

The Artillery Central Board also meddled in issues which were clearly outside its original field of responsibility. For instance, it vetoed in 1903 the publication in the corps journal (Memorial de Artillería) of an article which questioned the artillery's alleged monopoly on the use of machine guns. Even Vigón, an officer and historian of the corps, puts into doubt the competence of the board to judge the matter.[42]

[40] 'Los artilleros que firman en este album quieren conservar en el Cuerpo, y transmitir con su ejemplo a los que vengan a formarlo, el tradicional espíritu de honor, unión y compañerismo que recibieron de sus antecesores, con el que alcanzó las glorias y prestigios que goza para bien de la Patria y honor de sus individuos.
Y considerando que la escala cerrada es condición indispensable para el logro de tan altos fines, resuelven mantenerla entre sí, ofreciendo por su honor renunciar (por los méritos que la ley permita) todo ascenso que obtengan en el Cuerpo o en vacante de general a éste asignada, y no les corresponda por razones de antigüedad.' The text is taken from Jorge Vigón, Historia de la Artillería española, 3 vol. (Madrid, 1947), II. 134-5.

[41] Jorge Vigón, 'Breves notas para la historia de las Juntas de Defensa y de la Dictadura', mimeograph (n.p. or d.) filed in Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Republicana 47/73/8, p. 3; and Vigón, Artillería española, II. 134.

[42] Vigón, Artillería española, III. 240.

This example illustrates the mistrustful attitude of the specialist corps on issues of technological innovation. Artillerymen and engineers were jealous to preserve their privileged status (due to their academic education) in military technological and scientific matters, while they competed with each other for responsibilities in these issues.[43] Actually General López Domínguez, when he was war minister in the period 1892-1895, strengthened the corporate spirit of self-sufficiency by emphasizing the scientific and industrial responsibilities of the specialist corps (artillery, engineer and staff corps), and even the cavalry (on horse breeding and remount issues).[44] Thus, a reformist work of the early 1920s complained about 'the internal struggles between corps, trying to take away responsibilities from each other, not because of a noble desire for a better performance, but from a spurious interest in holding vacancies [i.e. in getting appointments for officers of one's own corps].'[45]

Indeed, the specialist corps often seemed more interested in scientific knowledge than in warfare, an attitude deplored by a number of contemporary military essayists. Captain Gallego, an engineer officer himself and not too harsh a critic, remarked in 1910 on the extraordinary contrast between the interest given in the Spanish army to the technical and educational institutions (firing schools, laboratories, technical commissions, and so on) and the neglect of the troops' combat training.[46] Two decades

[43] Equis, II. 114. This jealousy was not limited to the military field alone; for instance, in 1892, the general inspectorate of the engineer corps sent a memorandum to the war minister to defend the right of the corps' officers to work as professional civilian engineers outside the army, through the assimilation of their commissions to an academic degree: Inspección General de Ingenieros, Secretaría to Ministro de la Guerra, 24 May 1892, AGMS 2/3/183.

[44] Miguel Alonso Baquer, Aportación militar a la cartografía española en la Historia contemporánea. Siglo XIX (Madrid, 1972), p. 170.

[45] '[L]as luchas intestinas de Cuerpo a Cuerpo, tratando de quitarse mutuamente servicios, no por la noble emulación de desempeñarlos mejor, sino por el bastardo interés de tener más vacantes.' A.F.B. y P. de A., Nuestro ejército. Lo que es y lo que puede ser (n.p., 1923), p. 55.

[46] Eduardo Gallego Ramos, La campaña del Rif (1909). Orígenes, desarrollo y consecuencias (Madrid, c. 1910), p. 306 fn 1.

later, Brigadier Emilio Mola, an infantryman, was still criticizing harshly the excessive interest in scientific issues, which reflected and fostered the corporate rivalries:

> I can offer even more proofs of petty corporatism. The fight between the corps to increase each one its importance and extend its influence over the army as a whole has reached anarchical proportions. There are laboratories and special establishments without discernment. A lot of chemistry, a lot of mechanics and a lot of ballistics!, and, above all, too many sages![47]

Moreover, such rivalries often meant the unnecessary squandering of state funds. Gallego pointed out in 1905 that three brand new laboratories (run by the military engineers, the artillery corps and the state civil engineers) had been set up in the period 1898-1899 for a similar task of testing materials. He argued that it would have been more economical and rational to create a single laboratory whose equipment and funding might well have been shared by its three corporate users.[48]

c) **The corporate rivalry's effects on military effectiveness**.

How far the thinking of 'the more technical responsibilities, the more prestige' could lead is displayed by a manifesto written by the artillery officers of the Mahón garrison in the Balearic islands in November 1914. They complained that the artillery corps had been deprived of any corporate role in the development of military ballooning; it had no overall responsibility for military motoring nor involvement in its industrial matters; and it was

[47] 'Puedo aducir aún más pruebas sobre el particularismo. El pugilato entre los Cuerpos por acrecer cada uno su importancia y extender su influencia sobre el conjunto del Ejército ha llegado a extremos anárquicos. Hay laboratorios y centros especiales a tutiplén. ¡Mucha química, mucha mecánica y mucha balística! y, sobre todo, ¡demasiados sabios!' Emilio Mola, Obras completas (Valladolid, 1940), p. 972. Emilio Mola (1887-1937) pursued a successful career in the Moroccan campaigns and was promoted to brigadier in 1927; dismissed by the republican government due to his work as director of state security during the last stage of Alfonso XIII's reign, Mola returned to active service in 1935 under a right-wing cabinet; he became the organizer of the 1936 military rebellion and commanded the nationalist army in northern Spain until his death in an air crash in June 1937.

[48] Gallego, Proyecto de reorganización, p. 44.

kept out of railway issues.[49]

They also complained that the artillery corps' (in their view) exclusive scientific authority over the matters of ballistic science had decreased, because the infantry and cavalry sections at the Firing School compiled their own firing tables for rifle and carbine. These officers also deplored the fact that the infantry had got, thanks to the machine gun, responsibilities for crew-served weapons (which had been a traditional monopoly of the artillerymen); according to them, this proved that the artillery corps had not received its fair share of responsibilities as the number of new military devices grew.[50]

Thus these artillery officers felt aggrieved because the infantry corps was fully responsible for the ballistic studies of its own weaponry. And they lamented the fact that technological innovation did not always mean an extension of their authority over ordnance and its use. Faced with such obstacles, the general corps - and especially the infantry - had to fight hard to overcome the bureaucratic opposition of the more technical-minded corps and develop their own tactical doctrines.

An instance of the way the overlapping of corporate responsibilities could hamper the infantry's own experimental labour was the Central Firing School - Escuela Central de Tiro (ECT). This was formed in 1904 from the Artillery Firing School and divided into four sections (field, fortress and siege artillery; coastal artillery; infantry; and cavalry). The creation of the school had been opposed by the artillery, which wanted to monopolize the 'legal responsibility' for all weaponry and firing matters. The existence of the cavalry section was odd anyway, for

[49] Equis, II. 118-9.
[50] Ibid., II. 119.

the cavalry weapons' firing was similar to the infantry firing; actually an inspection report of 1907 wondered if it would be a better arrangement to fuse the infantry and cavalry sections into a 'portable arms school'.[51]

Perhaps it was reckoned that the cavalry section provided active appointments for a number of officers. The school itself was also an oddity because no other country had combined infantry and artillery firing schools: their respective modes of firing were too different and the infantry schools were rather tactical training centres. On the other hand, the ECT did not work as a testing centre either, because this role was performed - even for small weapons - by the Artillery Section of the War Ministry. To add insult to injury, the infantry and cavalry sections' own firing ranges were under the authority of the engineer corps. According to Capitán Equis, worse than the organizational flaws was the almost worthless tuition. The courses had an 'informative' character only. Generals and regimental commanders were exempted from any course at all. Other corps' officers attended the artillery courses but artillery officers did not follow the infantry courses. Moreover, according to Capitán Equis again, the teaching staff did not keep its expertise up to date and easily lost track of new doctrines.[52]

Given this situation, it is not surprising that, as late as 1918, a military essayist, Captain Gascueña, complained about the lack of tactical agreement between the fighting arms. The 1913 infantry tactical regulations did not offer a comprehensive picture of combined arms combat, which had become the most usual case, while the 1910 artillery tactical regulations did not define

[51] Revista de Inspección: Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/20.
[52] Equis, II. 89-100.

in a clear way the mission of direct support to the infantry.[53] As Gascueña put it:

> Neither of the two regulations considers these more or less lasting groupings of artillery and infantry with a common mission, those frequent cases in which artillery elements are charged with directly supporting an infantry attack with subordination in mission, though not in command, or those exceptional ones in which temporary groupings are formed, by making up a tactical unit with subordination of the artillery to the appointed commander for such a unit.[54]

The need for tactical cooperation would not remain a matter of theoretical analysis because the Spanish army was to wage in the 1910s a low intensity war in the Moroccan Protectorate, where all-arms columns played an important role. During the first phase (1911-1916) the artillery seems to have performed poorly. Vigón blames the dispersal of artillery units in penny packets attached to the columns for this.[55] But it can also be asked if a less corporate attitude to tactical training would have provided a better insight into combined arms operations.

Moreover, the scientific haughtiness of the specialist corps may well have been responsible for fostering a fashion for bookish scholarship among the infantry officers, who tried to make up for their lower academic education. This trend seems to have been of no benefit for their professional performance. After the campaign of 1909 in Melilla, the General Staff itself complained about the predominance given in the qualifications of infantry officers to manifestations of written brainwork - which fostered the production of superfluous works on military theory - over the

[53] Epifanio Gascueña, El principio de la cooperación y enlace de las Armas y nuestros vigentes reglamentos tácticos (Toledo, 1918), pp. 14, 16.
[54] 'Ninguno de los dos Reglamentos considera esos agrupamientos más o menos duraderos de Artillería e Infantería con misión común, esos frecuentes casos en que fracciones de Artillería están encargadas de apoyar directamente un ataque de Infantería con subordinación de misión, aunque no de mando, ó aquellos otros excepcionales en que se forman agrupaciones temporales, constituyendo una unidad táctica con subordinación de la Artillería al jefe que se nombre para dicha unidad.' Ibid., pp. 16-7.
[55] Vigón, Artillería española, III. 183.

proficiency displayed in regimental service.[56]

Later scholarship offers somewhat contradictory views about this issue. According to the French scholar Andrée Bachoud, there was an increase in Spanish professional literature, fostered by the military authorities, after 1909 (at least until the mid-1910s). Actually a decree of 17 January 1912 turned the writing of original scientific works into a requirement for promotion to the rank of brigadier, though the quality of this literature was sometimes poor, 'as if the author were more concerned to add up pages than to make a new point.'[57] On the contrary, the scholar Andrés Mas has pointed out that non-fighting appointments and scientific training lost prestige among the officers most engaged in the Moroccan war. And the historian Victor Morales Lezcano, based on the social scientist Julio Busquets' work, even states that the attitude of anti-intellectual pragmatism displayed by the officers fighting in Morocco was due to their limited military education.[58] This last assessment is rather questionable. As has been shown above, the criticism of military education recorded in the contemporary professional literature alleged that the academic content was excessive. Perhaps it was the excess of theory in their academy years which produced in many officers a dislike of formal professional education for the rest of their careers.

In any case, many officers in Morocco paid small attention to the more cerebral side of military operations. Such a dislike of intellectual effort in warfare could lead them to scorn

[56] Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, Enseñanzas de la campaña del Rif en 1909 (Madrid, 1911), pp. 76-7.
[57] '[C]omo si el autor estuviera más preocupado por sumar páginas que por expresar un nuevo punto de vista.' Andrée Bachoud, Los españoles ante las campañas de Marruecos (Madrid, 1988), pp. 105-6.
[58] Andrés Mas Chao, La formación de la conciencia africanista en el ejército español (1909-1926) (Madrid, 1988), pp. 58, 60-1; Victor Morales Lezcano, El colonialismo hispanofrancés en Marruecos (1898-1927) (Madrid, 1976); Busquets, p. 97. Morales uses an early edition of Busquets' work, but the content about this specific issue is the same in the 1984 edition.

methodical staff and logistical work, less glamorous than an infantry assault with fixed bayonets.[59] Stanley G. Payne describes this attitude with a graphic sentence: 'Even when qualified staff officers were available their advice was usually ignored by the combat officers, who liked to boast of their reliance on cojones ("guts" or, literally, testicles) alone.'[60]

The corporate rivalries were thus influential in disturbing the Spanish military environment, and stood in the way of developments in military doctrine. Corporate rivalries were not unique to the Spanish army, and were found in armies all over the world. Nevertheless, some armies overcame the worst effects of them on military doctrine thanks to a type of organization developed in parallel with the mass armies of the late nineteenth century and whose authority stood above all the corps of the military: the general staff.[61] Unfortunately, the development of the general staff in Spain was linked to another case of corporate struggle. This is better understood through a survey of the odd position of the staff corps within the Spanish officer corps.

3. The odd corps out: the struggle against the staff corps.

a) The staff corps from 1810 to the 1880s.

A precedent for the staff corps (Cuerpo de Estado Mayor) can be found in a small group of officers attached to the field headquarters in the brief war of 1801 against Portugal. But the staff corps of the Spanish army was really born in 1810 after a

[59] Cardona, p. 36. During the campaign which led the Melilla district forces, under the command of a cavalry general (Fernández Silvestre), to the disaster of Annual (July 1921), the staff officers played a very small role - if any - in the operational planning, and their functions were often reduced to passing on orders: Expediente Picasso. Documentos relacionados con la información instruida por el señor general de división D. Juan Picasso sobre las Responsabilidades de la actuación española en Marruecos durante julio de mil novecientos veintiuno, facsimile edition (Mexico, D.F., 1976), p. 311.
[60] Payne, Politics, p. 154.
[61] Michael Howard, War in European History (Oxford, 1976), pp. 99-101.

proposal of General Joaquín Blake. The liberal-oriented government approved Blake's proposal for two reasons. On the one hand, the war against Napoleon's army had shown the need for highly efficient officers helping the senior commanders in the conduct of operations. On the other hand, these officers, hand-picked according to professional proficiency, were expected to be more receptive to liberal ideology; so, besides their duties as military advisers, they were supposed to play a useful political role within a high command which was still dominated by aristocrats. This implied political function led to the suppression of the corps under King Fernando VII's periods of absolute power (1814-1820 and 1823-1833). After a few years of provisional existence, the staff corps was formally restored in 1838.[62]

The creation of the staff college in 1842 marked the end of the first period (1810-1842) of the corps' historical evolution, according to Miguel Alonso Baquer. From 1842 to 1893, the staff corps reached its maximum degree of corporate autonomy and specialization; Alonso Baquer divides this long second stage into four shorter periods. [63]

In the first period (1842-1850), the corps extended the duration of the staff college's syllabus and required an entrance examination for the candidates coming from the General Military College, whose preparation was reckoned unsatisfactory. From 1850 to 1867 the staff corps sought to put its college on a level with those of the other corps: it recruited candidates straight from civil life, and made an effort to win prestige through scientific

[62] Busquets, pp. 189-90. More details of the early history of the corps can also be found in José Ignacio Muro Morales, 'El Estado Mayor: el nacimiento de un cuerpo facultativo encargado de la direción de la guerra', RHM, XXXV, 70 (January-June 1991).
[63] Alonso Baquer, Aportación militar, pp. 150, 159.

proficiency (especially in the fields of geodesy and cartography). By the early 1860s the corps thought its position safe enough to claim that its mapmaking activities were comparable to the other corps' military functions, and therefore it deserved operational command appointments as well. After a decline caused by the upheavals following the fall of Queen Isabel II in 1868, the corps recovered its previous standards from 1875 to 1882 and displayed more attention to military issues proper. The period 1882-1893 featured a crisis of the scientific-oriented corporatism within the army, after the creation of the General Military Academy; the staff college focused the training of its students on military operations, lessening the scientific education. This stage finished in 1893, when General López Domínguez closed the General Military Academy in order to preserve the autonomy of the specialist corps.

b) <u>The problem of the reform of the staff corps</u>.

Although the general arms and the specialist corps distrusted each other, nonetheless they shared a common mistrust towards the staff corps. This mistrust was based, in this writer's view, on the corps' somewhat hybrid nature. The general arms reckoned that its elitist attitudes (based on higher educational standards) resembled too much those of the facultative corps, whereas the artillery and the engineer corps saw the staff corps officers as rivals (due to their high educational standards) and as parvenus of sorts (because their careers were not ruled by a closed list system). Indeed, the artillery officers even kept a tacit commitment not to join the staff corps.[64]

The staff corps certainly did not keep the solidarity with the

[64] Cordón, p. 142.

specialist officers in the defence of the closed list. The bonds linking the staff corps and the other specialist branches of the service on this issue were broken in January 1894, after a staff corps officer, Captain Picasso, accepted a promotion by war merit won in the small Melilla conflict of late 1893. This meant the actual acceptance of the open list by the staff corps.[65] Such behaviour was born from the staff corps officers' realization - from 1875 on - that the prestige won through their performance on campaign could be more influential than scientific achievement. Thenceforward, they sought to reach the general officer ranks with first hand knowledge of the realities of combat and life in fighting units, which would support their claims to hold high operational command appointments or high political-military office. Actually some staff corps officers (such as the future General Weyler) had stood out by following this career model, which was in line with General Martínez Campos' policy of fostering the moral unity within the military through participation in the fighting.[66]

Nevertheless, such a policy could be overstretched by self-interested officers. A harsh critic of the Spanish military at the end of the nineteenth century reported that, in the Cuban campaigns of 1895-1898, many army corps and divisional chiefs of staff, instead of performing their essential staff duties, took command of operational columns with the backing of the general officers commanding the major units. Therefore, the staff work was never organized properly in the headquarters. Even if the needs of colonial warfare were different from those of a European regular campaign, a good general staff organization was still required to

[65] Alonso Baquer, Aportación militar, pp. 159-60. In 1921, Picasso (then a major-general) headed the commission of inquiry on the Annual debacle, whose proceedings were later known as the 'Picasso dossier'; he was an uncle of the painter Pablo Ruíz Picasso.
[66] Ibid., pp. 171, 191.

maintain 200,000 troops in a theatre of operations of over 100,000 square kilometres.[67]

The way staff duties should be performed, either through a separate corporate branch of the military (the staff corps) or through the temporary appointment of officers with special training (the concept of a 'general staff service'), was an issue much discussed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. By the 1880s a small group of reformist officers drew conclusions about the military events of the 1860-1880 period (especially the Prussian-German victory in the 1870-1871 war against France). One of these conclusions was that an efficient general staff was indispensable for the command of modern mass armies. The success of the Prussian model had convinced the reformists of the need to reform the mobilization system and its territorial organization, in order to make effective use of the reserve manpower in wartime. Such a reform meant changing the current organization of the staff corps, focused on its traditional mapmaking role.[68]

General Martínez Campos, the leading military personality of the early decades of the Restoration, was a moderate reformist, who thought that the mapmaking missions of the staff corps (though they had to be entrusted to a scientifically trained branch of it) played only a supporting role and were not essential for the staff work.[69] However, he did not undertake any actual reform of the organization of the staff corps.

On the contrary, General Cassola, war minister in 1887-1888, was a more resolute character. He reckoned that proficiency in

[67] Efeele, Desastre, pp. 22-3.
[68] Fernando-María Puell de la Villa, 'El general Cassola, reformista militar de la Restauración', RHM, XXII, 45 (July-December 1978), pp. 180-1.
[69] Alonso Baquer, Aportación militar, p. 170.

cartography was not the monopoly of any corps, and therefore should not determine the role of staff officers. Moreover, Cassola thought that general staff appointments were nobody's monopoly. So, after being appointed as war minister, he included among his reformist plans the abolition of the staff corps: staff duties would be performed by especially trained officers of all the other corps, after the Prussian-German model. These officers would remain in their corps' lists and perform regimental service after every tour of duty in staff appointments. On the other hand, although the traditional, overspecialized mapmaking tasks were discarded, the staff officer's position was enhanced by turning it into a more influential advisory and executive appointment near the commander.[70]

Although the reformist proposals of Cassola were finally defeated by the pressure of the vested interests within the military, the debate about the staff corps and the general staff service remained alive. General López Domínguez tried to solve the problem through a middle-of-the-road approach in 1893. He retained the staff corps, whose new members thenceforth would be graduates of the staff college who decided to leave their corps of origin; those who supported the idea of the general staff service would return to their corps as <u>diplomados de Estado Mayor</u> (staff graduates).[71] As will be shown later, however, this arrangement did not solve the fundamental problem.

c) <u>The training of staff officers after 1893</u>.

López Domínguez's reform also affected the training of staff officers, so a summary of the evolution of this training before 1893 is a necessary preliminary step. A staff college (<u>Escuela</u>

[70] Alonso Baquer, <u>Aportación militar</u>, p. 170.
[71] Alonso Baquer, <u>Ejército en la sociedad</u>, p. 196.

Especial de Estado Mayor) was created in Madrid in 1842. After three years of studies at the General Military College, staff corps officer candidates spent one more year at the staff college; in 1845, the staff college's syllabus was extended to three years of studies plus one year of practice.

1850 saw a significant change with the closing of the General Military College: after this year the staff college (whose syllabus was extended to four years of studies) would admit straight from civil life those candidates able to pay for their studies and train them separately from the other corps. The college - whose name was changed in 1867 to Academia de Estado Mayor (Staff Academy) - kept this system until 1882. After the creation of the General Military Academy, the college turned into a specialist school (Academia de Aplicación de Estado Mayor) for students coming from the military academy. The new syllabus was three years long plus a period of practice which became four years long by 1889. However, only one class graduated through this system, since it was abolished by López Domínguez's reforms.[72]

The staff college was renamed as Escuela Superior de Guerra (ESG) in 1893. Requirements for entrance were the rank of lieutenant or second-lieutenant and at least three years' seniority after commissioning as second-lieutenant (including one year of regimental service); if the student wanted to join the staff corps after graduation, he must not be older than twenty nine years when entering the ESG. Since commissioning officer candidates when they were (or were about to be) eighteen years old was not unusual, a Spanish officer could be an ESG student at twenty one.[73] In the German army, in contrast, most officers were

[72] Alonso Baquer, Aportación militar, pp. 148-9.
[73] CLE 1893, No. 33 (article 27). The students of the intake of 1898 were twenty years old on average: this writer's own calculation based on data taken from AME 1899.

commissioned at twenty one and had to serve in a regiment for four years before applying for admission to the Kriegsakademie. The theoretical studies in the ESG lasted three years but the syllabus' military contents seem small in comparison with the academic ones:

-First year.
i)Elements of astronomy, topography, fortification, military bridging, castramentation.
ii)Artillery and engineer ordinances, regimental internal service, foreign tactical regulations.
iii)Algebra, spherical trigonometry and analytical geometry, general geometry and general history (optional subjects).

-Second year.
i)Descriptive and strategic military geography, telegraphic and telephonic signals, railways, ballooning, cryptography.
ii)Outline of military and naval organization (in Spain and major powers), military art, staff duties and regulations, survey of floating material.
iii)Descriptive geometry, calculus and rational mechanics, chemistry, gunpowder and explosives, and ordnance manufacture (optional).
iv)Foreign language (English, German or Arabic).

-Third year.
i)Survey of Spanish naval artillery and foreign artillery.
ii)Political economy, military administration, political and administrative law, international law, survey of medical and quartermaster equipment.
iii)Astronomy and geodesy or elements of zoology and botany, mineralogy and geology.
iv)Foreign language (English, German or Arabic).

This academic orientation repelled many artillery and engineer officers (actually no new student came from these corps in 1896), who thought their scientific 'exclusivity' under threat. This did not benefit the prestige of the ESG.[74]

The German army's Kriegsakademie, by contrast, had the following syllabus (though this is the syllabus set up in 1907, its contents seem not to show significant changes with regard to previous years):

-First year: Tactics, military history, fortification, ordnance, medical service, general history, military and international law; (optional subjects) pre-1648 history, mathematics, physics, foreign languages.

[74] Equis, I. 132-5.

-Second year: Tactics, military history, fortification, topography, communications, naval warfare, general history; (optional subjects) pre-1648 history, mathematics, foreign languages, chemistry, physical geography.

-Third year: Tactics, military history, staff duties, siege warfare, general history; (optional subjects) pre-1648 history, mathematics, foreign languages, topography, geodesy.[75]

Comparing the German syllabus with the Spanish one, it can be seen that the former had a clear-cut core of military subjects centred around tactics and history, and all its scientific subjects remained optional. On the contrary, tactical and historical matters look underdeveloped in the Spanish staff college's syllabus.

The teaching of the ESG was judged unsatisfactory in the early years of the twentieth century, and the college was reorganized in 1904 by War Minister General Linares. Linares realized the need to increase the number of officers qualified to perform operational staff duties and stood for giving priority in promotion to general officer rank to officers who had passed the staff college.[76] The new ESG syllabus was as follows:

-First year.
i)Military and strategic geography, basic notions of geology.
ii)Political economy and military administration, hygiene, international law, medical field service.
iii)Topography, notions of electricity.
iv)Conversation and writing in French.
v)Horsemanship, fencing, photography, practical sessions of topography and visits to medical and quartermaster corps centres.

-Second year.
i)Military history
ii)Mathematical algorithm, astronomy, geodesy, meteorology, military industry, technical and practical studies in military communications (optional).
iii)Art of war, grand tactics, military law.
iv)Foreign language (English, German, Arabic, Portuguese), fencing.
v)Landscape sketching, horsemanship, practical sessions in subjects of ii) and iii).

[75] Luis de la Gándara Marsella, El oficial alemán de la escala activa y de reserva (Madrid, 1916), pp. 236-7.
[76] Alonso Baquer, Ejército en la sociedad, pp. 237-8.

-Third year.
i)Military history.
ii)Use of artillery and fortification in warfare.
iii)Staff duties, wargaming, communications as a means of war.
iv)Foreign language (English, German, Arabic, Portuguese), fencing.
v)Panoramic military sketching, horsemanship, practical sessions in subjects of iii), practical journey for staff work exercises and geographical surveys.[77]

The non-military scientific content was substantially reduced (although one cannot help but wonder how far the staff officer's proficiency depended on his skill with the sword). As a whole, this new syllabus bore more resemblance to those of other foreign staff colleges. For instance, in the French army, whose studies for the staff diploma lasted two years, the contents included the following subjects: military history, applied strategy and tactics, staff duties, fortification, ballooning, international law, geology and geography, military law and administration, mobilization, German, Russian (optional), railways, hygiene, medical service, naval warfare, and horsemanship.[78]

The teaching methods of the ESG were changed as well. Official textbooks were abolished; instead the teaching staff was to encourage the development of analytical skills and judgement through the writing of essays, and through group projects and group debates in the classroom, which allowed the display of the students' personal views. In short, any teaching only based on rote learning had to be banished.[79] Nevertheless, it is not clear how successful this change of methods was. A graduate of the ESG argued in 1921 that the college was still inflexible and unwilling to accept critical views (at least in some subjects). And, the same year, a Spanish student at the French army's staff college

[77] Equis, I. 142-3.
[78] Ibid., I. 109-10.
[79] Memoria del Jefe del Estado Mayor Central, 1907, SHM-CAD 9/1.

commented, via Colonel García Benítez (the military attaché), on the too erudite learning system of the ESG, by contrast with the French institution, where teaching was based on case studies taken from recent campaigns.[80]

d) <u>Attack and defence of the staff corps</u>.

The reforms after 1893 did not stop the antagonism towards the staff corps. One of its most heated critics, Capitán Equis, even lambasted the quality of its officers. According to Capitán Equis, the root of the problem lay in the system of entrance into the staff corps. After the reform of 1904, candidates for the ESG had to be captains or lieutenants with two years' regimental service. An officer who got the staff diploma remained in his corps after leaving the ESG. In order to join the staff corps, an ESG graduate had to apply for admission whenever there were vacancies in its list, before being promoted to the rank of major in his parent corps (the career in the staff corps started at the rank of captain).[81] But only the youngest officers (that is, those who could presume a career advance) applied for admission to the corps. However, they often graduated with the lowest marks of their class, due to their relative immaturity. Thus the worst qualified students got into the staff corps whereas the best ones - most of them older men with many years of service as captains - preferred to stay in their corps rather than joining a new officer list and starting again behind younger captains belonging to a previous college class, and who had been able to apply for a vacancy before. In order to attract the brightest graduates, the staff corps pursued a policy of fast promotions which was only

[80] Enrique Maquieiría, 'Hombres e ideas de la guerra europea', <u>Memorial de Infantería</u> (hereafter <u>MI</u>), X, 109 (February 1921), p. 80; Juan García Benítez, 'Nuevos metodos de enseñanza en la Escuela Superior de Guerra francesa', <u>La Guerra y su preparación</u> (hereafter <u>LGP</u>), VI, 2 (February 1921), p. 133.
[81] <u>CLE</u> 1893, No. 33 (article 32).

feasible through the creation of as many appointments for staff corps officers as possible.[82]

Capitán Equis also pointed out that another result of the co-existence of the staff corps and the diplomados was the rivalry between the two groups of staff officers. The staff corps officers wanted to cut the number of diplomados to prevent them from occupying staff appointments - if not, the policy of fast careers within the staff corps would be under threat. The fact that appointments near the high command were almost deemed a passport into it also spurred this attitude (which was not unjustified: in 1895, eleven out of the Spanish army's thirty nine lieutenant-generals came from the staff corps, whereas thirteen came from the infantry). What made this competition an even more lamentable case of corporate selfishness was the decaying state of the Spanish army. Since the budgets did not allow an efficient preparation for war, the term 'staff work' (outside the forces in Morocco at least) and its alleged 'technical' complexity - which the staff corps used as a justification of its existence - actually concealed more and more red-tape. Indeed this corporate self-interest even fostered more bureaucracy.[83] As Capitán Equis concluded: 'Mainly due to the fault of the staff corps, the Spanish army is a lie wrapped in notepaper.'[84]

Nonetheless, the reader must bear in mind that Capitán Equis was an infantry officer and therefore his criticism suffered from corporate bias as well. So, how justified was the antagonism towards the staff corps?

[82] Equis, I. 137-8.
[83] Ibid., I. 125, I. 138-9, I. 159-62. The fear which the competition of the diplomados caused among the staff corps officers is voiced in Pío Suárez Inclán, Organización del Cuerpo de Estado Mayor, 1810-1910 (Madrid, 1912), p. 192.
[84] 'Por culpa principalmente del Cuerpo de Estado Mayor, el ejército español es una mentira envuelta en papel de barba.' Equis, I. 160.

The military archives file primary evidence which shows that the staff corps was not very pleased that diplomados received the same training as the candidates to the corps. There is no evidence to find out the extent of such a mood, but the fact that two staff corps officers of very different rank and writing a decade apart proposed similar solutions to cope with the diplomados suggests that the mood was shared by large sections of the corps.

The first piece of evidence comes from the report on the inspection of the ESG carried out by General Suárez Inclán (who had been promoted from the list of the staff corps) in 1907.[85] It is not clear if the points made in the report are actually General Suárez's own ideas, but it seems plausible that his views were influential in the conclusions of the report. It was certainly a good opportunity to defend corporate interests. The report pointed out that it was not a good idea to allocate equal value to all the subjects of the syllabus, because this meant that a student who excelled in general academic matters could get a better place in the graduation list than another who obtained high marks in the essential professional subjects. So the report proposed allocating to each subject a quotient which indicated its relative importance for the overall qualification of the student. So far, so good. But then the report remarked that the ESG students had different motivations in their training as staff officers. The proposed change would not affect the students merely aiming for the diploma, but it would affect those aspiring to join the staff corps since their place in the graduation list settled the priority for admission and the place in the corps' officer list.

Therefore the report questioned the policy of teaching the same syllabus for both groups, since it could be deficient for staff

[85] Memoria del Jefe del Estado Mayor Central, 1907, SHM-CAD 9/1.

corps candidates and too demanding for those just looking for an extension of their professional expertise. The solution to this problem put forward in the report was to divide the syllabus into two parts. The first one would be a common course including the essential military matters; the second part would be a more demanding course reserved for those called to perform permanent staff duties (i.e. the staff corps officers). Thus, more officers would come to the Escuela Superior de Guerra to improve their military education without any need to turn themselves into 'perfect' staff officers after five years of theoretical studies and practice.

The implied consequence of this proposal was to render diplomados unfit for staff appointments, since only the officers of the staff corps would be fully qualified to hold such posts. Therefore, the corps would be able to justify its enlargement (and new promotions) whenever there were staff vacancies. There is no evidence in the files consulted by the present writer about the later fate of the proposal, though it obviously was not accepted by the higher military authorities because there was no significant change in the syllabus of the Escuela Superior de Guerra.

The second piece of evidence dates from early 1918, so it is contemporary with the political-military crisis caused by the juntas de defensa after 1917 (which will be surveyed in Chapter 5). The Higher Defence Committee (Junta Superior de Defensa) of the staff corps consulted its officers in December 1917 about the need for preserving a corporate organization performing staff duties. An officer posted in Valladolid, Captain Benavides, argued, in his answer dated 2 January 1918, for the absolute need for keeping the staff corps, instead of replacing it with a general staff

service.[86] His first argument was that the common training, the constant performance of staff duties and the cohesion caused by belonging to a single corporate branch provided unity in working procedures and methods. On the contrary, the different corporate background of the diplomados - though they carried out similar tasks - would damage the unity of the whole if the general staff service was implemented.

Another of Benavides' arguments was that the staff corps, due to its own corporate organization, limited unhealthy ambition among its members, because all of them had the same legal rights. On the contrary, according to Benavides, the diplomado of the general staff service would be placed on a different level in relation to his corps' fellow-officers because of his separate staff duties and the special training for the staff diploma, whereas he would be keen to please his senior officers, who could back his career up. Therefore the general staff service would offer more fertile ground for unlimited personal ambition. Finally, Benavides reckoned it very difficult to achieve a good performance in staff duties if these were alternated with regimental service.

Captain Benavides also pointed out several dangers for the survival of the staff corps. One of these was the corps' decaying state, which was partly a reflection of the decay of the army as a whole, but it was also due to its own neglect and lack of collective effort. Another major danger he saw (and this point shows the degree of ill-will between the two groups of staff officers) were the diplomados. Their numbers (and their foreseeable increase) and their deeds caused and fostered hostility towards the corps in the press and in political circles;

[86] Captain Nicolás Benavides to Junta Superior de Defensa del Cuerpo de Estado Mayor, 2 January 1918, Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Republicana 47/73/7a.

even the archbishop of Tarragona, who held a seat in the Senate, had allegedly displayed antagonism! Benavides expressed fears that the political debate could bring about a cut in the number of admissions to the staff corps, which would lead to a consequent increase of diplomados. Some political groups and sections of the press - mostly of leftist leanings - also were especially hostile because the corps (according to Benavides) strengthened the unity of the army (the major support of government), and therefore this held back their ambitions.

Benavides recommended the case for the staff corps to be presented to leading politicians, who could defend its cause in the parliament. He also recommended the establishment of a secret record of data on the main foes of the corps, especially the diplomados (a proposal with somewhat sinister tinges). Benavides concluded with a proposal to turn the ESG into an institution which would graduate staff corps officers only. Those officers who did not want to join the corps would make up a sort of adjutant's service, after two years of studies plus one more of practice. These officers would perform ancillary staff duties and become a reserve of staff officers in wartime; they would serve usually within their corps, though they could be called up to work in manoeuvres under the orders of staff corps officers.

The essential coincidence of Captain Benavides' last point about the staff college with General Suárez's views is significant. The ultimate aim of both was to turn the diplomados into second-class staff officers, who would therefore be denied the responsibilities and benefits of being real staff officers. Thus the staff corps would recover a monopoly of the main staff duties, at least. This monopoly had been broken by the 1893 reform, which gave the same

professional qualification to staff corps candidates and those who aspired to the diploma alone. Therefore, the staff corps had to remove this equality if it wanted to maintain its raison d'être. The fact that a general officer in 1907 and a captain one decade later shared rather similar solutions to this problem makes it plausible to think that corporate self-interest was highly developed in the staff corps and hence that criticism of the staff corps as a whole on this ground was not unfounded.

Furthermore, Benavides' papers bear witness to the deep rivalries within the military; the suggestion to spy on the staff graduates illustrates clearly how far the deterioration of the inter-corps relationship could reach.

e) The staff corps and the development of the General Staff.

What made the rivalry of the staff corps with the rest of the military even more serious was its consequences for the development of the General Staff. According to Comandante Beta, the staff corps worked against the military cabinet set up by War Minister General Echagüe; it could not tolerate ideas alien to the corps on issues related to the reorganization of the army. Any crisis within the military caused by a reorganization project meant a crisis for the existence of the staff corps, so its esprit de corps and its instinct of survival urged the corps to take control of the reform. The result was the preservation of the corps without any real improvement of the army.[87]

Echagüe's military cabinet was kept idle by his successor, General Luque, while the General Staff's rebirth was prepared under the guidance of staff corps officers. According to Comandante Beta, their aim was to turn the General Staff into 'an

[87] Beta, pp. 64-5.

organization which saved the hegemony so endangered by that inconvenient military cabinet, which had to be destroyed in a hurry, and this [the cabinet's disbandment] was carried out, to the relief of many people.'[88]

Comandante Beta, despite his criticism of that corporate attitude, stated that he did not underrate the individual value of the members of the staff corps, whose educational standards were higher than those of the other corps. But this superiority also made more dangerous their corporate selfishness. And, since they were facing up to another group with similar professional qualifications (the diplomados), the struggle was waged on grounds which damaged the reforms which the army badly needed. The other corporate rivalries seriously affected the effectiveness of the army as well:

> But these struggles among 'guilds' do not have the [same] importance...as that one waged by the guiding 'guild' against all the guided 'guilds'; and its result is that an army whose general staff functions are still in embryo has got the following organizations to carry them out: the staff corps, a staff college and a legion of staff graduates; three sources of unsurpassable material, and a very deficient service, the most deficient one of our weak military body.[89]

Certainly, a reform in depth of the army was not a very realistic goal when the officer corps was divided about who were the best qualified to direct such a work. That the root of such division lay in corporate factionalism is proven by the fact that there was no criticism (excepting Capitán Equis) of the professional proficiency of the staff corps officers as

[88] '[U]n organismo en el que se salvara la hegemonía tan comprometida por aquel malhadado Gabinete Militar, que era preciso destruir a toda prisa, y así se consumó para tranquilidad de muchos.' Ibid., pp. 70-1.

[89] 'Pero estas luchas entre gremios no tienen la transcendencia...que la que se entabla por el gremio director contra todos los gremios dirigidos; y resultado de ello es que en un Ejército donde las funciones de Estado Mayor son bien embrionarias, tenemos los siguientes organismos para cumplirlas: el Cuerpo de Estado Mayor, una Escuela de Guerra y una legión de diplomados: tres filones de inmejorable material, y el servicio deficientísimo, el más deficiente de nuestro enteco organismo bélico.' Ibid., p. 72.

individuals: what displeased the rest of the military were their behaviour and their privileges as a group. Nonetheless, a general staff service would not necessarily have been a panacea: the French army had adopted the general staff system after 1871, but - according to Douglas Porch - this did not prevent its staff officers from turning into 'inward-looking bureaucrats sunk in routine, in their personal careers and in defending their privileges against poachers.'[90] This description applied even more to large sections of the Spanish military, due to the strength of corporate spirit. Corporate factionalism had got so much out of hand by the mid-1910s that it became a serious obstacle to the reforms which would increase the effectiveness of the Spanish military, and in defending so zealously their corps' particular interests, the Spanish officers were an obstacle to their own professionalization.

[90] Douglas Porch, The March to the Marne. The French Army 1871-1914 (Cambridge, 1981), p. 58.

3.- THE DEBATE ON FIRE POWER AND INFANTRY TACTICS, 1899-1913.

Warfare was in a process of transformation during the late nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. The infantry was very much affected by this transformation, caused by the development of increasingly effective firearms. This chapter describes and assesses how the Spanish military coped with the new conditions, by looking at the evolution of tactical doctrine for the infantry, and the performance of this arm in the campaign of Melilla (1909).

1. Fire power and the problem of the offensive.

a) The impact of new firearm technology on the battlefield.

The Spanish army was not ignorant of the changes that technology had brought to warfare in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Weapons like quick-firing artillery, the magazine rifle and the machine gun delivered so much fire power on the battlefield as to transform its traditional features.[1] A shrewd observer of technological evolution, Colonel Marvá, described the change in this way at the beginning of the twentieth century:

> Fire's extraordinary accuracy and destructive energy force the masses to disperse and look for protections which cannot be found already in the metal breastplate nor behind the wooden fence. The entrenchments have had to leave their artistic profiles...; the host hides itself in the ground folds, and the skirmishing line disappears from sight...[2]

A distinguished military essayist, Lieutenant-colonel Banús,

[1] Concise surveys of technological innovations are found in Hew Strachan, European Armies and the Conduct of War (London, 1985), pp. 111-21; and Martin van Creveld, Technology and War. From 2,000 BC to the Present (London, 1991), pp. 170-5.

[2] 'La extraordinaria precisión del tiro y su energía destructora obligan a desenfilar las masas y a buscar protecciones que no pueden encontrarse ya en el peto de metal ni tras la cerca de madera. Los atrincheramientos han tenido que abandonar sus artísticos perfiles...; la hueste se oculta en los pliegues del terreno, y la linea de tiradores desaparece de las vistas...' José Marvá y Mayer, Ciencias aplicadas al arte militar (Madrid, 1902), p. 91.

elaborated on this point. Due to the increased range of the rifle, infantry troops had to adopt combat order at a distance of 1,500 metres or more from the enemy. Moreover, this order had turned from closed ranks, elbow to elbow, into dispersed lines of skirmishers. Thus the soldier was no longer under the close supervision of his officer, and this situation had negative effects on his morale. On the other hand, the advance under fire was slow and, since the distance to cover became longer, the fighting was more prolonged. The longer the battle and the more difficult the advance, the easier it was for the attacker to get demoralized and call off the assault. So the offensive had become a very difficult operation, and frontal attacks would be almost impossible - unless combined with enveloping ones.[3]

Nevertheless, the contemporary professional literature, while recognizing the growing importance of fire power, asserted that armies could not remain motionless shooting at each other. Though the value of the bayonet had diminished, the attacking side could not do without the pursuit of a clash if it wanted to complete the work of fire power and defeat the enemy.[4] This meant taking the offensive whenever possible, despite the difficulties caused at the tactical level by the improvement of weapons, in order to impose one's will on the enemy. And since the major wars from the last third of the nineteenth century to the outbreak of the First World War were won by the side which displayed the most offensive spirit and plans, the military doctrines in vogue all over Europe in this period emphasized the offensive.[5]

[3] Carlos Banús y Comas, Reflexiones acerca de la guerra anglo-boer (Madrid, 1902), pp. 63-4. Commissioned in the engineers corps in 1872, Banús (1852-1934) fought against the carlists (1873-75), was a teacher at the Engineers Academy (1877-1890) and director of the army engineers laboratory; he won professional and academic renown through his writings on military and technical issues.
[4] Antonio Aleixandre, 'Formaciones de combate', RTIC, XI, 2 (July-December 1901), pp. 73-6.
[5] For an overview of military doctrine in this period, see Jay Luvaas, 'European Military Thought and Doctrine, 1870-1914' in Michael Howard (ed.), The Theory and Practice of War (London,

b) The Spanish army and its war experiences, 1873-1898.

Although Spain was not involved in any major international conflict, the Spanish army had experienced the effects of the growing power of firearms in the Third Carlist War (1872-1876). Any position occupied by the attacking troops had to be fortified at once. General Ruíz Dana observed the same year the war was over how modern firearms gave to the tactical defensive and to field fortifications an importance they had lacked before. The carlist troops in the Basque-Navarrese theatre of operations had learnt to make an extended use of field fortifications, and - according to Ruíz Dana - only a shortage of offensive spirit prevented them from turning their defensive successes into major victories.[6]

Actually the carlist forces suffered many casualties from rifle fire in the combat of Puente la Reina (in October 1873, during the beginnings of the regular operations in the North), when they threw themselves in packed battalion columns against the rear guard covering the withdrawal of the government army.[7] So they fought in open order during the battle of Montejurra (November 1873). Moreover, since they fought defensively, the carlists took advantage of hedges and fences to build earth and stone breastworks. However, the high profile of the works made them easy targets for the government artillery. In December, in the combat of Velabieta, the carlist defenders dug ditches and raised small breastworks with the removed earth; but the ditches were too wide (1.5 metres) and the breastworks still offered a clear target to

1965), pp. 82-91; and Michael Howard, 'Men against Fire. Expectations of War in 1914', International Security, 9, 1 (Summer 1984), pp. 45-57.

[6] Federico de Madariaga, 'La Infantería española', RTIC, XIV, 1 (January-June 1904), pp. 6-7; Pedro Ruíz Dana, Estudios sobre la guerra civil en el Norte, de 1872 a 1876 (Madrid, 1876), pp. 151-4. Ruíz Dana (1822-1891) was a staff corps officer and reached the rank of lieutenant-general in 1876; he was director-general of cavalry and captain-general of Puerto Rico.

[7] The following overview of the evolution of carlist field fortifications is based on Ruíz Dana, pp. 200-12.

the artillery.

In the battles of Somorrostro (early 1874), the carlists' whole battle front was covered by a line of trenches, linked by redoubts, and very low turfs replaced the breastworks in order to reduce the profile. Nevertheless, the artillery still took a heavy toll of the carlist defenders (almost half of their casualties in the fighting from 25 to 27 March were due to the government cannon).[8] The experience of the combats of February and March proved to the carlists the need to improve their field fortifications. The trenches became deeper (almost a man's height) and narrower (half a metre): thus shells could not get into the trench and the defenders could avoid their fragments by crouching. The artillery also had a less clear target since the removed earth was now scattered.

This new model trench was used in the battle of Estella (June 1874), but instead of forming long, continuous lines the carlists dug shorter trenches (15-20 metres); these also had hook-like ends which allowed troops to avoid enemy fire in case of evacuation. Their success led the carlists to protect the access routes to the territory under their control with lines of this sort of field fortification, which obliged the government forces to carry out major operations of strategic envelopment (the carlist army did not have enough troops to man permanently all the fortified sectors).

Besides improving their fortifications, the carlist defenders polished their tactical skills. They occupied only the trenches directly threatened by the enemy. If the shelling was too heavy, they moved in single file, taking advantage of the ground, to

[8] Vigón, Artillería española, III. 123.

other trenches in the flanks and the rear. When the cannonade stopped to allow the infantry's advance, the defenders came back quickly and fired once the enemy troops came within easy range (300-400 metres). These defensive tactics were possible because the attacking infantry, in order not to expose themselves too much to the enemy fire, had to start the advance from a distance of 1,000-1,500 metres from the trenches.

The experience of this war was doubtless taken into account when new infantry tactical regulations were edited in 1881, since they stated: '[B]ecause of the range, the accuracy, the flat trajectory and the speed of fire of the current rifle, fire is the main, almost exclusive way of fighting for the troops in the front line.'[9] However, after twenty years of peace, the memories of those battles had probably faded when the Spanish army again went into action, in the colonial conflicts of Cuba and the Philippines after 1895, and the war with the United States in 1898.

Since this last war was fought in far off islands and the naval superiority of the United States was overwhelming, Spain could not aspire to overall victory. However, it seemed reasonable to think that a successful defence on land could make up for the naval defeats and secure better terms at the negotiating table. The commander-in-chief in Cuba, General Blanco, followed a strategic defence to preserve key places, which would be the bases for operations in the field against any American expedition.[10] There was no shortage of soldiers in Cuba at the outbreak of war: 196,000 troops (including 41,000 irregulars), of which 34,000 were deployed in the Santiago de Cuba province.[11] However, these

[9] '[P]or consecuencía del alcance, de la precisión, de la tensión de la trayectoria y de la rapidez del tiro del fusil actual, el fuego es el medio principal y casi exclusivo de combate para las tropas que están en la primera linea.' Táctica de Infantería. Memoria general (1881), p. 16.
[10] Miguel Alonso Baquer, 'La guerra Hispano-americana', pp. 134-6.
[11] Herbert H. Sargent, The Campaign of Santiago de Cuba, 3 vol. (London, 1907), III. 157-9.

numbers were not all available for operations against an invading force since the figures included many men in hospitals and a lot of troops on garrison duties. Another handicap was that this colonial army had fought against guerrillas since 1895 and lacked preparation for regular warfare: the Spanish field artillery in Cuba was weak, there were not enough transport means to move large forces, and the troops were unused to fighting against a regular army (though any fighting experience was better than no experience at all).[12]

An American expeditionary corps (17,000-strong) landed in late June 1898 near Santiago de Cuba, a major city and harbour in southeastern Cuba, where a Spanish naval squadron had taken refuge. The American force did not encounter serious resistance until it reached the external defences of Santiago. About 1,700 Spanish troops barred the way to the city from the east. 1,200 Spaniards were entrenched on San Juan Heights; the rest occupied the fortified hamlet of El Caney. On 1 July, the Americans attacked both positions. 6,600 troops needed most of the day to drive the stubborn defenders out of El Caney. The other assault force (8,400-strong) took a shorter time in seizing the trenches on San Juan Heights, but the American troops suffered so heavily (nearly a thousand casualties) that they were unable to carry on. The Spanish troops lost about 600 men; the American casualties amounted to almost 1,400 men. After these clashes, the fighting was limited to some skirmishing (the Americans actually reckoned their position so weak as to think of a withdrawal to the beachhead). Meanwhile, the Spanish naval squadron was destroyed in front of Santiago de Cuba when it tried to escape on 3 July. The Spanish command no longer saw purpose in defending the city, and

[12] Efeele, 'La guerra con los Estados Unidos', Estudios Militares (hereafter EM), XVIII, 1 (January-June 1899), p. 294.

the garrison capitulated on 17 July.[13]

c) The debate on the tactical lessons of the 1895-1898 wars.

The few Spanish officers who reflected on the combats of the Spanish-American War concluded that a factor in the Spanish defeat had been the lack of offensive spirit and the overconfidence of some commanders in the strength of defence.[14] Such criticism was not limited to professional voices. A civilian essayist and journalist, Damián Isern, also charged the Spanish senior commanders with lack of initiative. General Blanco, for instance, allegedly remained passive when Santiago de Cuba was threatened and failed to reinforce its defenders.[15] As for contemporary military critics, one of them thought that the local command in Santiago suffered from lack of resolution: due to its concern for protecting all the perimeter, it had dispersed its forces instead of keeping them concentrated to go to the aid of the threatened sector.[16] Major Ricardo Burguete, writing under the pseudonym 'Critón', voiced angrily the feeling that the opportunity to achieve a major success had been missed by the fainthearted Spanish command:

> Who ever saw a campaign start by giving the troops such a passive role as that given to ours? Confined to the perimeter of trenches after three days of gallant defence, after receiving reinforcements [Burguete referred to a column of 3,000 men arrived from other places of the province], watching the symptoms of discouragement and exhaustion in the attacking troops, why was the flag of truce hoisted when the smallest offensive demonstration would have been enough to bring about the withdrawal arranged beforehand by the

[13] This summary of the campaign of Santiago de Cuba is based on José Müller y Tejeiro, Combates y capitulación de Santiago de Cuba (Madrid, 1898); Severo Gómez Núñez, La guerra hispano-americana. Santiago de Cuba (Madrid, 1901); Efeele, Desastre, pp. 54-6; Sargent; and Smith, pp. 119-59.

[14] Alonso Baquer, 'La guerra Hispano-americana', pp. 134-6.

[15] Damián Isern, Del desastre nacional y sus causas (Madrid, 1899), pp. 490-7.

[16] Efeele, Desastre, pp. 55-62. In the less important theatre of operations of Puerto Rico, the obsession of the Spanish command to defend the capital prevented the garrison from creating a reserve able to counterattack the isolated columns of the American invasion forces: Ibid., pp. 118-20.

Americans?[17]

The essayists agreed in criticizing the Spanish senior command's conduct of the operations against the Americans. However, there was no similar agreement when the tactical teachings of the campaigns of the late 1890s as a whole were discussed in the professional literature.

One line of thought stated that the Spaniards had put too much reliance on fire power, which had led them to a lack of offensive drive. Major Ricardo Burguete - who had fought with distinction against the Cuban insurgents - blamed the current tactical regulations for fostering a spirit of excessive caution and hindering the exploitation of success after seizing enemy positions. Though the Spanish troops had rarely been defeated by the Cuban rebels on the battlefield, the former limited themselves to carrying on firing while the latter made good their escape, so the fruits of victory were wasted.[18]

This view was not accepted by other officers, who thought the Spanish troops had not displayed lack of aggressiveness. Quite the contrary. They achieved tactical victories continuously, since they always took the offensive in the combats in the bush against the insurgents, even if the fire preparation was short. Actually, these essayists said, the nature of those conflicts and the Spanish conscripts' poor training in musketry and skirmishing made the development of real fire tactics like in regular warfare

[17] '¿Quién vió jamás empezar una campaña dando a las tropas el papel pasivo que se dió a las nuestras? Encerradas en el recinto de trincheras después de tres días de bizarra defensa; recibidos los refuerzos, viendo en la tropa asaltante todos los síntomas del desfallecimiento y del cansancio, ¿qué pasó para arbolar bandera de parlamento cuando la menor indicación ofensiva hubiera bastado para pronunciar la retirada de antemano dispuesta por los norteamericanos?' Critón, p. 101. Nonetheless, a Spanish naval officer who witnessed the campaign thought an offensive reaction against the Americans very difficult: Müller, pp. 275-6.

[18] José Yumrep, 'De la disciplina del fuego', RTIC, X, 2 (July-December 1900), p. 432; Ricardo Burguete Lana, Nuevos métodos de combate. Proyecto de reglamento de ejercicios y maniobras para infantería (Madrid, 1903), pp. 22-4, 153; Critón, pp. 34-5.

impossible. According to Colonel Modesto Navarro, the usual tactical procedure was to form in line, open a heavy fire (which wasted a lot of ammunition), and charge with the bayonet after a very short time. Any excess of caution or lack of boldness imputed to the troops was a reflection of the command's qualities: whenever the commanders were bold and aggressive, the troops followed them.[19]

Despite this evident disagreement on tactical doctrine, the Spanish army seemed to push aside any debate in depth about the military teachings of the overseas campaigns. This attitude may have been caused by a desire to forget the painful experience of defeat in the war against the United States - and, by extension, everything related to the wars of 1895-1898. Nonetheless, Major Burguete complained that the scorn of irregular warfare and minor tactics allegedly felt by some sections of the military had helped the army to disregard the experience of these conflicts.[20]

2. Bayonet versus fire power.

a) The value of cold steel in modern warfare.

The disagreement on the tactical lessons of the overseas campaigns was linked to a more general debate on the ways to cope with the new conditions on the battlefield. To be more accurate, the issue to be solved was how to carry out the tactical offensive when weapon technology made the defensive stronger. An answer was to emphasize speed and the psychological effects of the bayonet.

The foundation of this doctrine was that if defensive fire was

[19] Eduardo Gallego Ramos, 'El municionamiento de la infantería en el combate moderno', RTIC, IX, 1 (January-June 1899), pp. 26-7; Luís Fernández de Cordova, 'Táctica del Comandante Burguete', RTIC, XII, 1 (January-June 1902), p. 116; Modesto Navarro, 'Observaciones sobre la táctica de Burguete', EM, XXI, 1 (January-June 1902), pp. 165, 259.
[20] Alonso Baquer, 'La guerra Hispano-americana', p. 144; Ricardo Burguete Lana, Mi rebeldía (Madrid, 1904), pp. 310-4.

always more powerful, then the bayonet charge was the only means through which the offensive proved its superiority. According to this doctrine (which found in Major Ricardo Burguete a very outspoken supporter), the best protections against fire were speed and mobility. The aim of the offensive was to cover the distance quickly, through an advance without interruptions. Thus the enemy could not aim its weapons accurately against a fast-moving target. The light field fortification and the methodical advance in which the soldier took advantage of the roughness of ground must be dismissed; otherwise the troops would be too exposed to enemy fire whenever they made a halt.[21]

In the eyes of offensive-minded essayists, such as Major Burguete and his brother Manuel (who was an infantry officer as well), fire in the offensive was seen more as a liability than as an asset: it delayed the advance and diminished the will to get closer to the enemy. Moreover, since most contemporary armies were made up of short-service conscripts, it was not possible to give them a good military training. If the tactics of gradual advance were used, these troops would end up by staying still behind any cover available, and wasting ammunition in a useless, long-range firefight. So they must be carried to the final assault line as soon as possible. Once there, they would not be able to wait to defeat the enemy through fire, but they would feel a compulsion to charge and destroy the enemy with the bayonet. More training in the use of this weapon would increase the soldiers' offensive spirit and self-trust. Ricardo Burguete even argued that the colonial campaigns (including the Spanish ones in Cuba and the Philippines) had seen the inferiority of the Europeans in close combat, faced with peoples used to fight with stabbing weapons,

[21] Burguete, Nuevos métodos, pp. 25-6; Hilario Hernández Rivera, 'Sobre el espíritu que debe informar un reglamento táctico', RTIC, XIII, 1 (January-June 1903), pp. 143-4.

because the former used to resort to defensive squares. But he forgot to add that the European soldiers' alleged softness did not prevent them from slaughtering their more robust, offensive enemies through the fire power of modern quick-firing rifled weapons.[22]

A slightly different approach to this doctrine was taken by Captain Dolla, of the cavalry corps. He argued that firearms were the more effective the closer they were to the enemy. Therefore, in order to increase their effects, they had to be moved forward - thus movement became the decisive factor of the combat. Dolla also argued that the advance provided moral fortitude as a bonus. The more resolute and faster the advance, the greater the morale boost. Moreover, according to Dolla, what had happened in the performance of modern weapons was an increase in their moral effects due to the fear they roused. And this fear increased as the distance from the enemy diminished. The firearms' effectiveness depended more on how long the troops were exposed to their shots than on the volume of their fire per unit of time. So the decision of the fighting had to be achieved as soon as possible through the advance.[23] This argument was rather fallacious, since it underrated the importance of improvements in modern weapons' range and rate of fire. Actually the effectiveness of the modern quick-firing rifled weapon was based on its ability to inflict damage from longer distances sooner. When weapons could kill in a few minutes as many men as they did in an hour a hundred years before, saying that the longer the troops stood under fire, the more they suffered, was just a truism.

[22] Burguete, Nuevos métodos, pp. 15, 26; Manuel Burguete, 'El choque al arma blanca como resolvente único y decisivo en todo combate moderno', RCM, XXVI (1901), pp. 201-3; Critón, pp. 32-5. On the colonial wars, see Daniel R. Headrick, 'The Tools of Imperialism: Technology and the Expansion of European Colonial Empires in the Nineteenth Century', Journal of Modern History, 51, 2 (June 1979), pp. 258-61.

[23] Angel Dolla, 'Conferencias del Círculo Militar', RTIC, XV, 1 (January-June 1905), pp. 32-5.

The arguments of the supporters of the doctrine of outright offensive echoed partly the thinking of the French military essayist Charles Ardant du Picq. He had stated that the soldiers' morale diminishes as they lose confidence in the effectiveness of their weapons to beat the enemy from afar. So if the firearms became more perfect, the advance under fire would have a greater moral effect on the enemy, and victory would go to those who marched forward in the most orderly and resolute way.[24] Although the Spanish sources surveyed do not allow one to trace a clear, direct link back to the work of du Picq, it is plausible to think of it. A Spanish translation of du Picq's Etudes sur le combat had been published in 1883, so he was not a totally unknown essayist. On the other hand, du Picq's ideas could have been known secondhand. French tactical thinking after 1870 was partly inspired by du Picq (although essayists usually misread his writings). And there is some evidence suggesting that French military thinking was more likely to be known in Spain due to reasons of geographical and cultural closeness.[25] Therefore, the Spanish military men were more likely to be influenced by French (and thus by du Picq's) ideas than by other foreign thinking.

b) Fire power as the foundation of tactics.

Facing the doctrine of offensive à outrance, there were those who followed ideas more in tune with the official doctrine after 1881. If the strength of the defence lay in fire power, the offensive had to apply even more fire power to overcome the former. The attacking troops had to keep firmly in mind the idea

[24] Charles Ardant du Picq, Estudios sobre el combate, 2 vol. (Madrid, 1883), I. 160-1.
[25] A contemporary survey of foreign professional periodicals mentions fourteen French journals, against seven German ones: X., 'La cultura militar en los comienzos del siglo XX', RTIC, XIV, 1 (January-June 1904), pp. 90-6, 139-44. On the influence of du Picq's ideas on French military thinking, see Stefan T. Possony and Etienne Mantoux, 'Du Picq and Foch: The French School', in Edward Mead Earle (ed.), Makers of Modern Strategy. Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler (Princeton, 1943), pp. 216-7.

of marching always forward, but this did not mean that fire was an ancillary means which they could do without. Colonel Modesto Navarro expressed the idea as follows:

> In the attack one must have the resolution to advance constantly until arriving, if necessary, at the assault of the enemy lines with the bayonet, but arriving quickly at this situation is less important than arriving in a good condition, that is, after the adversary has been broken physically and morally through long range fighting by means of well chosen and duly spaced out fire from position to position.[26]

Navarro also argued that if speed were indeed so good a protection, the cavalry's role on the battlefield would never have diminished (since horse troops are faster than infantry).[27] According to another supporter of fire power-based tactics, Captain Gil Juste, the bayonet enthusiasts overrated the psychological effect of cold steel (for example, seasoned Spanish troops did not shun hand-to-hand fighting in surprise attacks by Philippine insurgents armed with stabbing weapons). On the contrary, the fear of a hail of bullets and shells, which killed in a impersonal and random way, was as great as that of the bayonet. If the defenders overcame the former, they would also overcome the latter, and therefore the alleged moral superiority of advance <u>per se</u> disappeared. So any assault carried out while the defenders stayed in their positions ran the risk of being wiped out.[28]

For advocates of tactics based on fire power such as Captains

[26] 'En el ataque hay que tener la resolución de avanzar siempre hasta llegar, si se hace menester, al asalto y abordaje a la bayoneta de las lineas enemigas, pero cuidando no tanto de llegar presto a ese caso cuanto de llegar en buenas condiciones, esto es, luego de que el adversario haya quedado bien quebrantado material y moralmente mediante el combate a distancia por los fuegos de posición en posición bien elegidas y debidamente espaciadas.' Navarro, 'Observaciones', p. 292.
[27] Navarro, 'Observaciones', pp. 225-34.
[28] Germán Gil Juste [or Yuste], 'Formaciones y evoluciones de la compañía y del batallón', <u>RTIC</u>, XI, 1 (January-June 1901), 355-7. Gil Yuste (1866-1948) entered the Infantry Academy in 1882 and fought in the Philippines, Cuba and Morocco; he later was commandant of the Infantry Academy; a major-general on retirement in 1936, he joined the nationalist side and took charge of the War Secretariat (the embryonic war ministry) from October 1936 to early 1938.

Gallego and Gil Juste, the bayonet had lost its decisive role in the combat and assaults with cold steel would have no raison d'être in future battles. The combat would be opened by means of fire power, which would also carry out the main attack. Under the cover of artillery fire, the attacking troops would be able to advance to suitable positions, where they would start a shooting duel to achieve the fire superiority deciding the outcome of the fighting.[29] Actually Captain Gil Juste, an infantryman, thought that new artillery ammunition, such as melinite shells, would be able to overcome field fortifications and drive the defenders out of them. Thus tactical manoeuvring would be restored and fire power would be the means to prepare or impede the clash, the combat's supreme act.[30]

However, Gil Juste became less sanguine about the presumed effectiveness of such fire three years later and admitted that the tactical offensive was inappropriate against an entrenched enemy. But this did not mean the impossibility of offensive warfare, as stated by the Russian-Polish essayist Ivan Bloch. The offensive could still be carried out through strategic manoeuvre, which would turn the enemy forces out of their positions and force them into encounter battles. In this way, in having to cope with more unpredictable battlefields, the commanders' genius would still play a fundamental role. On the other hand, battles on unprepared ground offered the quick-firing artillery and magazine rifles many more chances to break the enemy, whose rout would be achieved by the cavalry - the shock arm par excellence - since this was more effective for the task than the infantry's bayonet attacks. So Captain Gil Juste foretold that cavalry would be the only shock

[29] Gallego, 'El municionamiento', p. 25; Germán Gil Juste, 'Como puede obtener la Infantería superioridad de fuego', RTIC, XI, 1 (January-June 1901), pp. 259-62.
[30] Germán Gil Juste, 'Algo sobre la nueva Artillería de campaña y los combates del porvenir', RTIC, IX, 1 (January-June 1899), p. 530.

arm in the battles of the future.[31]

This argument of an officer who recognized the growing power of firearms and the need to adapt tactics to this fact is noteworthy because it shows the survival of traditional views about the battle (through the attempt to integrate the traditional tactics of the cavalry, an arm whose role on the battlefield was eroded by technological progress). It illustrates how deeply rooted was the idea of the prevalence of the offensive despite the increased power of the defence. Nevertheless, the idea of strategic manoeuvre evaded rather than solved the concrete tactical problem: how to avoid or limit the effects of defensive fire power in the age of quick-firing rifled weapons.

3. The evolution of infantry tactical regulations.

a) The theoretical debate on tactical regulations, 1899-1913.

The rapid changes in warfare and the adoption of the Mauser magazine rifle forced the Tactics Commission to update the Spanish infantry tactical regulations after 1890. But the new regulations were not approved until April 1898.[32] Thus the Spanish troops fought the wars of 1895-1898 following the 1881 infantry tactical regulations. These regulations considered fire power as the principal means to overcome the growing strength of defence. The skirmishing line (called guerrilla in the Spanish military vocabulary) had become the main fighting echelon because of its fire action, dropping its old role as the screen for the assault columns.[33]

The 1898 regulations preserved the essential principles of the

[31] Germán Gil Juste, 'Proyecto de reglamento táctico para la Infantería', RTIC, XII, 1 (January-June 1902), pp. 34-6.
[32] CLE 1898, No. 109.
[33] Verardo García Rey, Estudios acerca de la táctica de infantería (Madrid, 1907), p. 15.

previous ones.[34] Fire was 'the main fighting element of the infantry' (el principal elemento de combate de la infantería).[35] Even more, the regulations were based on the conviction that contemporary infantry tactics came down to achieving fire superiority.[36] This was a cause of regret for supporters of shock action like Major Burguete. According to him, the spirit which had inspired the Spanish regulations of the late nineteenth century had been influential in the failures of the overseas campaigns in the late 1890s.[37]

Burguete pointed out that, despite the importance given to fire power, the official regulations did not specify what sort of fire was the most effective, either volleys or individual fire. He thought that the regulations overstated the tactical importance of the possession of ground. The most unwise were the articles recommending a thorough use of ground to get cover during the advance: if they were followed, individualism would kill any collective action since every soldier would advance his own way. It was the task of commanders rather than individuals to decide when to go to ground. The exaggerated concern for protection in the regulations was harmful for the offensive spirit.[38] But Burguete seems to overstate his case as well. The 1898 regulations actually stated that the attacking infantry 'must be more worried about advancing quickly and in an orderly way without heavy losses than about delivering fire of a kind which will not achieve real effects except in the last stages of combat...'[39]

[34] Memoria General sobre el proyecto de Reglamento para la instrucción táctica de las tropas de Infantería, pp. 10-1, AGMS 2/8/527.
[35] Reglamento para la instrucción táctica de las tropas de infantería, 3 vol. (1898) (hereafter RTI 1898), I. paragraph 147.
[36] Memoria General sobre el proyecto de Reglamento para la instrucción táctica de las tropas de Infantería, p. 11, AGMS 2/8/527.
[37] Burguete, Nuevos métodos, p. 24.
[38] Ibid., pp. 17-9.
[39] '[D]ebe preocuparse más de avanzar con rapidez y precisión sin grandes pérdidas, que de hacer

Burguete blamed the official doctrine's ambivalent spirit for overcaution. Even when talking about the assault, the regulations always bore in mind a possible repulse and the ways to reach safety in the rear, rather than emphasizing the decisive character which the attack must reveal. The 1898 regulations, in the parts dealing with the assault at company and platoon level, certainly did not encourage in junior commanders the idea of pushing far forward. For instance, after the paragraph describing the way the assault had to be carried out, the next one stated that, if the assault was successful, the enemy was to be pursued through fire alone and the platoon would re-deploy quickly in order to secure the conquered position against a counter-attack. And a third paragraph - which was longer than the first one - explained how the platoon had to retreat in case of failing in the assault. The paragraphs about the company assault were quite similar. According to another essayist, the regulations' warnings about keeping reserves whatever the circumstances were inspired by overcaution, as if the prevailing aim was to avoid setbacks. Thus it was impossible to achieve any decisive success and destroy the enemy, since exploitation would be timid at best.[40]

If Burguete complained of the excessive fear of enemy fire, Captain Gil Juste, on the contrary, thought that the tactical regulations underrated the effects of defensive fire power during the bayonet charge. If the regulations were applied literally, the troops would sometimes stand up in close order in the open at 300 metres from the enemy lines and they were supposed to act in an orderly way in this situation.[41]

un fuego que no producirá verdaderos efectos sino en las últimos periodos del combate...' RTI 1898, II. appendix I, article 1.

[40] RTI 1898, II. paragraphs 119, 120, 121, 309, 310 and 332; Burguete, Nuevos métodos, pp. 20, 23-4; Un oficial del regimiento "El Rey", 'Nuevos métodos de combate', RCM, XXVI (1901), p. 316.

[41] Germán Gil Juste, 'Los ataques a la bayoneta ante el fusil de repetición y de pequeño calibre',

The extent of the 1898 regulations was also criticized by another essayist. Their seven hundred pages were compared unfavourably with the one hundred and fifty-odd ones of the German or the French regulations. The only explanation for this was an excess of detail on matters of no use on the battlefield.[42] But the editors of the regulations argued that the lack of training grounds and major manoeuvres deprived the Spanish officers of the means to exercise their mastery of tactical procedures. That is, it made little sense to replace detailed instructions for tactical evolutions on the battlefield with broad guidelines about the principles inspiring the official tactical doctrine when the officers had few opportunities to put these principles into practice.[43]

Burguete did not limit himself to criticizing the current regulations. He wrote by 1900 an alternative draft of infantry tactical regulations and submitted it to the Tactics Commission. Burguete's regulations were tested by a full-strength company in the 1st Infantry Regiment El Rey.[44] The basic point of the project was to divide the infantry platoon into four squads arranged in files ten to fifteen men deep each. With the squad leaders ahead, the platoon would move in this formation on the battlefield. It would overcome obstacles by increasing the distance between squads, which would find their own way. Any obstacle which the platoon passed through in skirmishing line order could be overcome by this deeper formation and with no loss of the advantages of a closer order. Once it reached a position to rest or shoot, the platoon could deploy in line. The project was inspired by

RTIC, XI, 2 (July-December 1901), pp. 35-7.
[42] Un oficial, 'Nuevos métodos', p. 313.
[43] Memoria General sobre el proyecto de Reglamento para la instrucción táctica de las tropas de Infantería, pp. 9-10, AGMS 2/8/527.
[44] Un oficial, 'Nuevos métodos', p. 311-2. Burguete's regulations were published under the title Nuevos métodos de combate, and reprinted in 1903 and 1907.

Burguete's ideas of offensive à outrance and predominance of speed and shock over fire action, which have been explained above. The commanding officer of El Rey Regiment praised the offensive spirit, but he reckoned that the officers had to know its limits as well. Anyway, he thought that it was better to avoid any reference to caution in the regulations; otherwise the troops' morale might be harmed.[45]

Burguete's regulations were criticized at length by Colonel Navarro. He argued that they contained an unbalanced approach to warfare by placing so much emphasis on the offensive; the defence remained an important form of warfare and had to be dealt with in the regulations, since it might be forced upon one's own forces. There were also contradictions in the project: despite his cult of the bayonet, Burguete recognized on several occasions the importance of fire, both in the defence and in the attack. So Navarro wondered what was the point in persuading the troops that cold steel was supreme. He agreed that sometimes the troops had to close with the enemy in order to win, but the idea of a clash with the bayonet had become a moral concept rather than a material one. The trick was to convince the enemy that troops able to advance under fire would also be able to kill him with the bayonet, if the former waited in his positions for the latter. Fire was the means to break the will to resist such advance. If the destruction of the enemy was not mainly physical (the percentage of casualties had diminished in modern battles), the only tangible proof of having achieved moral superiority and victory was therefore the seizing of ground. The latter thus had a real tactical importance, contrary to what Burguete thought.[46]

[45] Burguete, Nuevos métodos, pp. 6-8, 41; Fernández de Cordova, 'Táctica del Comandante Burguete', pp. 115-6.
[46] Navarro, 'Observaciones', pp. 130-1, 168, 196, 321-3.

Navarro pointed out that, despite the talk of uninterrupted movement, Burguete actually adopted successive advances from position to position; this was unavoidable if the enemy had to be broken by fire. Moreover, the extended modern battlefields, the limits of the infantryman's stamina, the ruggedness of terrain and, of course, the enemy's fire forced troops to make halts during the advance; speed alone was no protection.[47]

Another criticism was that Burguete's deep formations did not offer any substantial improvement when facing modern firearms. Although these would be given more difficult frontal targets, their ballistics made it easier to hit in depth. Moreover, it got soldiers used to seeing the man ahead as a sort of shield, whose cover they would be unwilling to leave. Another flaw in Burguete's regulations was the excessive exposure of the squad leaders; morale was harmed when they became casualties.[48]

The sources consulted do not give any information on the official assessment after testing Burguete's regulations. However, a disappointed Burguete wrote a decade later that his project led 'a misleading, ill-fated official life.'[49] This suggests that his views were too radical to be accepted by the Spanish army at that time.

b) The lessons of the Russo-Japanese War: field fortifications and the rise of morale factors.

The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) gave an opportunity to observe closely the effects of state-of-the-art firearms in regular warfare. Burguete took advantage of this conflict to claim the soundness of his own tactical theories, by stating that they

[47] Ibid., pp. 260-5, 289-90.
[48] García Rey, Estudios de táctica, pp. 50-1; Navarro, 'Observaciones sobre la táctica de Burguete', EM, XXII, 1 (January-June 1903), p. 95.
[49] '[U]na vida oficial falaz y aciaga.' Burguete, La guerra y el hombre, p. 220.

had been adopted successfully by the Japanese army.[50] He praised the aggressive Japanese attitude, while the Russians looked more interested in the possession of positions alone. However, Burguete himself described how 'every inch of conquered ground was a victory [for the Japanese] and a support to carry on advancing. Every soldier - with a sandbag on his back - turned the bit of ground which he conquered into a formidable redoubt...'[51] This does not seem exactly the same thing he suggested when he talked in his tactical project about advancing without interruptions and the curbing effect of the use of the ground. Indeed Burguete would envisage, a few years later, the offensive combat as the action of a shooting line, from which squads would move forward in order to establish more advanced fire bases. He described this sort of advance as methodical and slow, taking advantage of folds in the ground.[52]

Burguete's writings are also a token of the interest about the use of field fortifications raised by the Russo-Japanese War. Actually some Spanish essayists had already displayed a similar interest around 1900. Given the predominance of defensive fire power, which caused more frequent halts during the advance, Captain Gallego thought that resorting to field fortifications was - besides dispersed fighting orders - the solution to the problem. These fortifications gave a degree of cover against rifle fire and shelling by making use of ground. They could also be used as rallying points if the assault was repulsed, or as a line of resistance against counter-attacks.[53] Other essayists reckoned

[50] Ricardo Burguete, La Ciencia del Valor. Psicología de la guerra. Aplicación al desarrollo episódico de la batalla de Mukden (Madrid, 1907), p. 243.
[51] '[C]ada palmo de terreno conquistado era un triunfo y un apoyo para avanzar. Cada soldado con un saco de tierra a cuestas hacía del palmo de tierra que conquistaba un reducto formidable...' Ibid., pp. 138-9.
[52] Burguete, La guerra y el hombre, pp. 214-6.
[53] Eduardo Gallego Ramos, 'Trabajos de campaña y herramientas de las tropas de infantería', RTIC, IX, 2 (July-December 1899), pp. 32-3.

that the experiences of the Boer War (1899-1902) endorsed this use of field fortifications and showed that the infantryman had to fight as much with the shovel as with the rifle and had to be trained accordingly.[54]

Based on the experiences of the Russo-Japanese conflict, several Spanish essayists discussed the importance of using the ground or, more accurately, the light field fortification, in the attack. Captains Carreras and Malagón, of the Infantry Academy's teaching staff, wrote that the Russo-Japanese War had proved the poor effectiveness of field artillery against entrenched infantry by contrast to the trials in peacetime. Therefore, the attacking infantry had to rely more on their own fire preparation, but they could not carry this out uncovered within the effective range of artillery. Moreover, once within the range of the enemy's musketry, the advance to the assault line would sometimes become so difficult as to limit this to the night hours (as actually happened in Manchuria). So they concluded the impossibility of any advance on open ground, before the ultimate assault, against any average fortified defence, and the need in modern campaigns for resorting to the old techniques of siege warfare in order to approach the enemy strongpoints.[55]

Major Avilés, though recognizing the usefulness of light, fast-built trenches in the defence and the attack, did not infer such a predominance of the field fortification. This was useful for economising on troops in inactive sectors, but excessive reliance on it could be demoralizing in the long term.[56] A few years later, Avilés (a lieutenant colonel by that time) was to argue that,

[54] Tomás Rodríguez de León, 'La infantería moderna', RTIC, X, 1 (January-June 1900), pp. 125-6; Banús, Reflexiones, pp. 52-3.
[55] Juan Carreras and Ricardo Malagón, Relaciones entre la fortificación y la táctica (Toledo, 1908), pp. 4, 21-3.
[56] Juan Avilés, 'Algunas lecciones de la última guerra', RCM, XXX (1905), p. 186.

though they must be used as a rule, field fortifications could (and had to) be discarded whenever this action improved one's own fire: the modern concept of field fortification gave the improvement of one's own fire priority over the protection role. On the other hand, he also stated that field fortifications did not diminish the offensive spirit of well-trained soldiers, who saw them as a temporary means to achieve fire superiority.[57]

Avilés' arguments on fortification were inspired by the alleged lessons of the Russo-Japanese War, which seemed to endorse the idea that the armies displaying the highest morale and the most offensive attitude would hold the upper hand in any future war, whatever the difficulties they faced on the battlefield. Fire power was now important because of the moral support it provided to the attacking troops, whereas it was underrated in the defence. According to Avilés, the war had taught that the modern rifle did not make impossible the frontal attack in open order and had not substantially increased the casualty figures. Higher rates of fire meant lesser accuracy in practice. The attack could not be successful if it had not been prepared through artillery and rifle fire. But the purpose of this fire was to tire and unnerve the defender, since the latter's fire lost accuracy after two or three hours' firefight.[58] Avilés does not explain why the attacking troops were apparently immune to this phenomenon, unless it was due to their alleged moral superiority.

Another essayist argued in 1907 that fire superiority only became manifest for the attacking side through moral agents: this meant in practice a resolute advance scornful of any danger. Thus the defender, confident within his positions at the start of

[57] Juan Avilés, 'La fortificación de campaña y su elemento fundamental, las trincheras abrigos', RCM, XXXIV (1909), pp. 38-40.
[58] Avilés, 'Algunas lecciones', pp. 185-6.

fighting, would lose heart when he saw his own losses and his inability to stop the attackers; then he would lose fire effectiveness, the casualties he inflicted would diminish, and the attacking troops' fire superiority would really be obvious.[59] This argument, which resembles du Picq's ideas, has a grain of truth (in the last analysis, defeated troops flee to avoid the clash with the enemy, so attacking troops must move forward sometime in order to win), but it portrays fire superiority as the consequence of the advance rather than as a requirement, which in an offensive-minded environment could not help encouraging premature advances.

The influence of the Russo-Japanese War was so strong that praise of morale-related qualities after 1905 spread to those who had endorsed fire power tactics before. One of them was Brigadier Modesto Navarro, who now expressed ideas which were nearer to the doctrine of the offensive <u>à outrance</u> than to fire-based tactics such as those supported by Navarro himself some years before. He explained that the battles in Manchuria had lessened the expectations about the quick-firing artillery's effectiveness. From now on, the artillery's role would be to provide support fire to make easier the infantry's advance, through the temporary paralysis and neutralization of the enemy forces instead of their destruction. This covering fire - despite its diminished material effect - was to stop the trend towards more dispersed formations in combat. A dispersed formation, though less vulnerable, was also more difficult to command, and considerations of the units' inner cohesion and command (so important for morale) must prevail over those related to vulnerability and one's own weapons effectiveness. Facing the danger on the battlefield, the troops

[59] M. Vicente Arcones, 'Estudios sobre el combate de la infantería', <u>RCM</u>, XXXII (1907), pp. 134-5.

needed an orderly grouping. The combat and its outcome were above all human actions of a moral nature. The roots of tactics lay in them.[60]

Even Marvá (also a general at that time) recognized explicitly that, after the experience of the Russo-Japanese War, the bayonet attack and the clash remained decisive against a determined, entrenched enemy since the cannon and rifle fire did not break the latter. Nonetheless, he also carried on arguing about the need to use formations adapted to the battle ground and light field fortifications. Moreover, General Marvá warned that, although moral factors were decisive when the material ones were balanced, the latter were becoming more important due to their increasing effectiveness.[61]

c) Towards new infantry tactics: the 1908 regulations.

The transformations of tactics after 1898 led to the creation (in early 1907) of a commission under the Spanish army's general staff in order to edit new, updated tactical regulations.[62] This writer's research has not found evidence related to the activities of this commission, so it is not possible now to assess the influence of the Spanish army's own experience on the new tactical doctrine for the infantry. A contemporary essayist, Lieutenant García Rey, reckoned that the Spanish officers had become infected with an offensive spirit after the defeat of 1898, which had been reinforced by the lessons of the Russo-Japanese War.[63]

There were also Burguete's tactical proposals. Burguete was

[60] Modesto Navarro, 'Avance de las tropas de infantería bajo el fuego de artillería', RTIC, XXI, 1 (January-June 1911), pp. 292, 329, 338, 369-70, 456.
[61] José Marvá y Mayer, 'La ciencia militar en el Ateneo', RTIC, XVII, 2 (July-December 1907), pp. 252-3, 492, 494.
[62] CLE 1907, No. 30.
[63] V. García Rey, 'La nueva táctica', RTIC, XIX, 1 (January-June 1909), pp. 407-8.

officially told that some of his ideas had been used for the new regulations. He was doubtful about this point, since he had been present neither in the discussions nor in the editing. But he was sure that only secondary ideas, if any, had been incorporated.[64]

A contemporary source pointed out that the infantry regulations of France (1904), Germany (1906), Italy (1905) and Russia (1907) provided inspiration for the Spanish doctrine.[65] The writings of contemporary essayists suggest that the French regulations were the most important influence. For example, García Rey thought that the Spanish doctrine on the development of combat was similar to the French one: general attacks by subordinate commanders all along the front, and exploitation of local success by the high command through a major effort (whereas the German doctrine was based on a thorough attack by the advanced guard combined with an enveloping manoeuvre of the main force). However, the Spanish doctrine attached more importance to fire power than the French one.[66] The French influence is also emphasized by a Gallic essayist, General de Torcy, who stated that the Spanish regulations had taken much of the contents of the French ones approved in 1904.[67]

The new infantry regulations were approved in a provisional way in August 1908.[68] The 1908 regulations actually ordered the advance through a combination of fire and movement by platoons.[69] The troops would reach the main firing position, beyond which any

[64] Burguete, La guerra y el hombre, p. 220.
[65] Federico de Madariaga, 'Instrucción táctica de las tropas de Infantería', RTIC, XVIII, 2 (July-December 1908), p. 495.
[66] Verardo García Rey, 'Doctrinas acerca del combate', RTIC, XXIII, 1 (January-June 1913), pp. 135, 230, 232.
[67] Louis Joseph Gilles de Torcy, Les espagnols au Maroc en 1909, 2nd edition (Paris and Nancy, 1911), p. 227. There is a Spanish edition: Los españoles en Marruecos en 1909 (Madrid, 1911).
[68] CLE 1908, No. 149.
[69] Reglamento provisional para la instrucción táctica de las tropas de Infantería (1908) (hereafter RTI 1908), article 291.

advance was impossible before achieving fire superiority; the halt would be long and heavy fire would be delivered by the infantrymen.[70] Once the enemy fire looked like weakening, the advance would start again in order to reach the assault line (in which the superiority of fire would also be definitively achieved).[71] The 1908 regulations seemed more offensive-minded than those published in 1898. They called for a thorough bayonet attack if the enemy showed signs of weakness. But if it was not so and the troops were nevertheless very near to the enemy, they must charge with the bayonet all the same.[72] The use of light field fortifications in the attack had to be very limited.[73] Even the defence had an offensive bias: 'By means of manoeuvre, and taking advantage of mistakes and faults of the enemy, the defence will change its role by taking on a energetic and determined offensive whenever feasible.'[74]

The regulations' emphasis on the clash and the offensive was a matter for criticism for Major Gil Juste, whose views were published in a series of articles in La Correspondencia Militar in late 1908. The regulations stated that the clash was the infantry's main means of action, but Gil Juste did not believe in its absolute necessity. An enveloping movement could also drive the enemy out of a position. Actually, he added, many defenders already 'beaten' by fire power remained in their positions because of the fear of being shot in the flight; the chance of running away came when the attacking troops charged with the bayonet. Thus the clash was often no more than a confirmation of victory (though

[70] Ibid., article 296.
[71] Ibid., articles 298, 305 and 306.
[72] Ibid., articles 310 and 311.
[73] Ibid., article 320.
[74] 'A favor de la maniobra, y aprovechándose de los descuidos y faltas del contrario, la defensa cambiará su papel, emprendiendo una enérgica y decidida ofensiva en cuantas ocasiones le sea factible.' Ibid., article 381.

it could really be decisive if the enemy was unbroken).[75] Gil Juste asserted that the excessive emphasis on aggressiveness and offensive spirit had been copied from the French regulations. According to him, attacking whatever the place and time was as harmful as a passive defence, nor did permanent aggression mean real courage. The latter, in any case, could not be inculcated through tactical regulations.[76]

Gil Juste's remarks prompted a reply in the pages of La Correspondencia Militar. According to the unidentified writer, Gil Juste was saying the same thing as the regulations: whatever the cause, the fact was that the defenders were put to flight once the charge was carried out. So the troops had to be ready for the offensive in order to conquer (a common idea of all the foreign regulations), and this readiness required the strengthening of morale-related factors and their guidance in a positive (i.e. offensive) direction. This was the regulations' task.[77] Gil Juste's answer to this criticism denied that all the foreign regulations resembled each other in emphasizing the offensive. They were different in the ways the offensive had to be undertaken, and in the factors which had to be given priority. He stressed that the Spanish regulations had simply copied the French army's doctrine, which had even found opposition in some sections of the French military, although the attachment to Napoleonic tradition and procedures had prevailed. Gil Juste foretold that future experience would prove the French army's mistake.[78]

The 1908 regulations also found severe criticism from Ricardo

[75] Coronel B. [pseud. of Germán Gil Yuste], 'Sobre el nuevo reglamento táctico de nuestra Infantería', La Correspondencia Militar (hereafter LCM), 28 November 1908.
[76] Coronel B. [pseud. of Germán Gil Yuste], 'Sobre el nuevo reglamento táctico de nuestra Infantería', LCM, 2 December 1908.
[77] X., 'Sobre el nuevo reglamento táctico de nuestra Infantería', LCM, 11 and 14 December 1908.
[78] Germán Gil Yuste, 'Sobre el nuevo reglamento táctico de nuestra Infantería', LCM, 19 December 1908.

Burguete, who seems to have had second thoughts on his work of 1900 and whose diatribes against the new infantry regulations show that he had taken fire power more into account by the early 1910s. He criticized the regulations because they forgot the emptiness of the modern battlefield, when they ordered troops to fire only against enemies in sight: it would be necessary to answer the enemy's fire power, but actually there were few chances to see any enemy - especially an enemy who had taken up defensive positions. On the other hand, once the troops started firing, the regulations gave no concrete guideline about fire control and ammunition consumption (they ordered troops simply to fire at will interrupted by pauses, but with no instructions about the duration and rate of the fire periods). The chapter on fire was seen as proper for a firing range, but not for infantry tactical regulations.[79]

Burguete thought that the regulations also overestimated the moral influence of the officer upon the soldier, whose natural fear would diminish discipline under fire. The soldier had to be told beforehand that the enemy would be invisible. If not, he would find it difficult to aim correctly when ordered, control his ammunition consumption, and stop firing, because he would see no reason to do it and, therefore, to advance.[80] The regulations gave no details about the array of troops on the battlefield beyond echeloning in a skirmishing line, supports and reserve. Moreover, they were occasionally contradictory: e.g. article 143's burning desire which inspired the troops to arrive at the clash did not match article 298's guideline about 'trying' the advance if the enemy looked like weakening. It was supposed that the advance,

[79] Ricardo Burguete, Teoría y práctica de la guerra. Evolución en el arte (Madrid, 1913), pp. 178-82.
[80] Ibid., pp. 184-8.

once started, would be carried out thoroughly; 'attempts' to advance hinted at a not so resolute attitude on the part of the attacker, according to Burguete.[81] He also remarked ironically on the regulations' lack of clear-cut, practical guidelines; it would have been easier to reduce the regulations to a single precept ordering commanders to use troops, weapons and ground wisely in order to defeat the enemy.[82] This last criticism had already been brought forward in 1908 by Major Bermúdez de Castro, who complained that the highbrow trends within the Spanish military had turned the 1908 infantry regulations into a philosophical essay.[83]

Besides criticisms, the 1908 infantry regulations faced a practical obstacle to their application in the Spanish army. An anonymous article in a professional journal wondered how the troops could be trained in the right implementation of the regulations when the Spanish infantry units were usually so much under strength.[84] By 1905, the official peacetime strength of the average infantry regiment of two active battalions was 517 officers and enlisted men (one battalion in wartime was supposed to be around 1,000-strong). A fifth of the strength was headquarters and specialist staff (clerks, musicians, and so on). Therefore, the eight active companies of this undermanned infantry regiment only had about fifty troops each. According to Captain Gallego, absences due to disease and secondments for ancillary duties often reduced the real strength of some companies to two or three men.[85] This situation does not seem to have improved three years later.

[81] Ibid., pp. 192-4.
[82] Ibid., p. 195.
[83] Luis Bermúdez de Castro, 'En contra de la nueva táctica', LCM, 31 December 1908.
[84] 'La nueva táctica de infantería', RCM, XXXIII (1908), pp. 354-5.
[85] Gallego, Proyecto de reorganización, p. 32.

4. The campaign of Melilla (1909) and its doctrinal consequences.

a) The military operations.

The 1908 provisional infantry regulations were tested in actual conflict one year after their approval, in the Melilla campaign of 1909. This campaign was the first step of the Spanish army's involvement in a long, bitter colonial war which was to affect the conduct of the military in Spain's politics during the next two decades.[86]

Spain had two enclaves on the northern shore of Morocco in the early twentieth century. They were the seaports of Melilla (which had been under Spanish sovereignty since 1498) and Ceuta. These enclaves had remained as isolated outposts until the early years of the twentieth century, when they provided a foothold to expand Spanish influence in Morocco. By early 1909, a Spanish mining company bought from a self-styled regional overlord the rights to exploit iron deposits near Melilla. However, the local Moorish natives did not like the agreement, and attacked the workers building the railway to the mines in early July. General Marina, the military commander of Melilla, reckoned his garrison insufficient to undertake punitive operations and protect the mining activities, so he asked Madrid for reinforcements.

The cabinet sent an expeditionary force (including called-up reservists) during the summer. The first troops to arrive were committed prematurely and suffered setbacks in late July, so the military activity was limited to consolidating a defensive perimeter and training the newly arrived forces. Offensive

[86] On the origins of the Spanish involvement in Morocco, see Payne, Politics, pp. 102-5; and David S. Woolman, Rebels in the Rif. Abd el Krim and the Rif Rebellion (Stanford and London, 1969), pp. 6-9, 35-42. The account of the campaign is based on Servicio Histórico Militar, Historia de las campañas de Marruecos, 4 vol. (Madrid, 1947-1981), II. 7-299.

operations started again in September: in a series of limited, cautious advances the Spanish expeditionary army (over 40,000-strong) subdued the nearby tribes and set up a ring of defensive positions and blockhouses around a slightly expanded area under Spanish tutelage. By November, the campaign of Melilla (which was also known as the Riff campaign, after the nearby mountainous region) was over. According to the official history of the campaign, the Spanish casualties amounted to 2,517 killed and wounded in action (plus 211 killed by disease); 1,765 Moorish corpses were buried.

The worst defeat suffered by the Spanish army during the campaign of Melilla took place in a ravine called the Barranco del Lobo (27 July 1909), when General Pintos' brigade was decimated by the Moorish natives' musketry. The brigade (six light infantry battalions) had to screen the passage of a supply convoy in front of the lowest slopes of Mount Gurugú. Although Brigadier Pintos needed only to keep the harassing natives at bay, he actually committed the whole brigade to an attack up the ravine. Since Pintos was killed in the early stages of the fighting, it is not clear why he thought this attack necessary. The advance of the Spanish brigade turned into a mess as the officers fell under enemy fire from the front and the flanks; the mauled Spanish battalions came to a halt, endured the fire for a while and withdrew in the most orderly way they could, while the artillery fire held the pursuing natives off. The Spanish forces lost about 750 killed and wounded. Official sources put the enemy losses at 475 killed and 1200 wounded (these figures may well refer to a longer time, since they were gathered later from statements of natives).[87]

[87] Servicio Histórico Militar, Campañas de Marruecos, II. 104-6.

b) Lessons of the campaign.

The contemporary professional literature admitted that the early performance of the Spanish infantry had been disappointing. According to Lieutenant-colonel Avilés, besides the Spanish expeditionary forces' lack of training and organization, a cause of the setbacks had been the recent introduction of the new tactical regulations, whose spirit the troops still had not familiarized themselves with.[88] General de Torcy wrote that the Spanish tactics in 1909 had been an improvised combination of the old procedures and the new ones, since only the conscripts who had recently joined the colours had been drilled in the 1908 regulations.[89]

The combat of the Barranco del Lobo was analyzed by Avilés and Captain Gallego. According to Avilés, the 1908 infantry regulations had a partial responsibility for the defeat: they were unclear about the consolidation of seized ground, while they were much more explicit about the pursuit. Thus, after the first gains of ground, the desire to exploit this initial success could prevail over the idea of consolidating the positions.[90] On the other hand, Gallego pointed out that the attack formations of Pintos' brigade were too dense. They could only be justified if General Pintos had thought (as Gallego surmised) of throwing the Moors out of their positions by the sheer drive of a bayonet charge (which required a closer order than the skirmishing line). However, the attack was lacking in preparatory musketry and artillery fire. The units did not display a capability for manoeuvring and taking advantage of the terrain either: there was

[88] Juan Avilés, 'Resumen de la guerra', RCM, XXXV (1910), pp. 6-7.
[89] Torcy, pp. 226-7. Payne states that the Spanish infantry used 'extremely old-fashioned' tactics in the Melilla campaign; given the contemporary background of tactical doctrine, this statement is wrong; a different issue is the tactics' suitability for the Moroccan conflict: Payne, Politics, p. 111.
[90] Juan Avilés, 'Enseñanzas de la guerra del Rif', RCM, XXXV (1910), pp.51-3.

too much confidence in sheer bravado.[91] Avilés remarked that the officers tried to encourage their raw troops through a determined, thorough attack, and disregarded the stages set by the regulations; this did no good for the conduct of the combat.[92]

Discussing the performance of the infantry during the whole campaign, Gallego pointed out that the Spanish troops did not follow the basic rule of modern tactics about taking advantage of terrain and light field fortifications. Despite the example of the Russo-Japanese War, the Spanish infantrymen did not know how to use the roughness of the ground, nor were the infantry units' sapping tools used during the combats.[93] The 1908 regulations must have been influential in this behaviour, since an officer praised (just before the outbreak of the conflict) how they had prepared the units to rank protection behind one's own fire effectiveness.[94]

Lieutenant-colonel Avilés put this problems down to the flaws in infantry tactical training. This had been based (due to the foreign influences and the Spanish army's own colonial experience) on offensive tactics: the clash had been given more importance than fire power. This state of affairs had been embodied in the 1908 tactical regulations, in which the officers were told to pay much more attention to the troops' morale than to the correct manoeuvring of their units. The Melilla campaign also highlighted the inadequate place given in the regulations to junior leaders within the units. Platoon and squad leaders were to be integrated into the skirmishing line, but they were unable in practice to control their men's fire during the combat. If they took post

[91] Gallego, Campaña del Rif, pp. 152-3.
[92] Avilés, 'Enseñanzas', p. 55.
[93] Gallego, Campaña del Rif, pp. 302-3.
[94] Bernardino García Conde, 'El nuevo reglamento en la práctica', LCM, 2 July 1909.

behind the line, they discouraged the troops. They finally resorted to standing up and walking along the line (thus offering a good target).[95]

Peacetime exercises turned the fire preparation of the attack into a few minutes' standstill before the assault. In real war, the preparatory fire could last hours. If the troops were not prepared for this situation, they could get demoralized by thinking that the operation was going badly. The troops did not practice the technique of lying down on the ground either (allegedly in order not to damage the uniforms!), so they got disheartened the first time they did it in action.[96]

Besides poor training, the nature of the fighting was another cause of bewilderment for the Spanish soldiers. They had to fight against an irregular enemy able to take the best advantage of the rugged ground, both for movement and shooting. In contrast, the Spanish army moved as on a drilling ground, according to Martínez de Campos (who fought in the campaign as a young artillery subaltern).[97] He witnessed how a divisional commander proved to be distrustful of the official procedures (or their stereotyped implementation, at least). General Tovar, watching a deployment of troops by the book, warned his subordinates: 'Don't play dirty tricks on me. We are no longer in Carabanchel [a training ground near Madrid].'[98] In the aftermath of the Barranco del Lobo, a feature of La Correspondencia Militar complained bitterly about the different fighting attitudes of Spaniards and Moors: the gallant displays of the Spanish troops were wrong against the Moroccan natives. Crawling on the ground was an adequate method

[95] Avilés, 'Enseñanzas', pp. 98-100.
[96] Ibid., p. 100.
[97] Carlos Martínez de Campos y Serrano, España bélica. El siglo XX. Marruecos (Madrid, 1972), p. 96.
[98] 'No hacerme faenas. No estamos ya en Carabanchel.' Ibid., p. 97.

for fighting the Moors, imitating their 'treacherous' calm.[99]

Lieutenant-colonel Avilés concluded that the idea of the offensive had to be understood as an attitude of the commanders' mind and will. The offensive required in practice a superiority in numbers and morale which was not always achieved at the start of the fighting. A temporary defensive posture could be needed in order to wear out the enemy forces. However, the training had given absolute priority to fast, offensive tactics such as those used in the first combats. When these tactics failed at Melilla, the soldiers, accustomed to the success of the simulated offensive, lost heart and confidence in their own tactics. The haste to develop the stages of the attack caused a disorder of the tactical echeloning, and was detrimental to any defensive action in the heat of the battle.[100] Such haste was sometimes due to the commanders' impatience, which made them unwilling to spend time in reconnoitring the enemy positions and in preparatory shelling.[101]

The General Staff's analysis of the campaign revealed weak points in the implementation of infantry tactical doctrine. The deployments often had not taken advantage of the effectiveness of modern firearms, and the small units kept unnecessarily close physical contact. This hindered the capability of these units for small-scale manoeuvre, so important in modern warfare. The fronts covered were too narrow to allow the units to move with ease.[102] In the fighting against the Moroccan native, the aim had to be victory through fire superiority and skilful manoeuvre. Although the bayonet charge could be essential sometimes, it had to be avoided as a rule since the troops ended up scattered and

[99] 'Impresiones', LCM, 2 August 1909.
[100] Avilés, 'Enseñanzas', pp. 113-6.
[101] Gallego, Campaña del Rif, p. 305.
[102] Estado Mayor Central, Enseñanzas del Rif, p. 81.

exhausted.[103] Gallego pointed out that bayonet charges were rare and carried out in company or platoon strength only; there never was an actual clash since this was shunned by the enemy.[104]

The Melilla campaign disclosed the weakness of cooperation between the artillery and the infantry. The irregular nature of the fighting gave few teachings - if any - about the performance of the artillery as an individual arm. The concealment and the dispersed fighting order of the enemy did not allow the most effective use of the artillery; many shells were wasted to destroy almost valueless targets. Moreover, there were seemingly no criteria about the operational ratios of artillery to infantry, so the columns were often unbalanced in their strength by arms; for example, a column could be very strong in infantry but weak in artillery. Avilés reckoned that the Spanish commanders' lack of experience in the use of combined arms was a reason for this problem.[105] Ricardo Burguete complained that the artillery had been moved too far forward on many occasions, when good firing positions, suitable for grouping the cannon, were available in the rear. He also pointed out that the Spanish troops lacked liaison means to coordinate the efforts of artillerymen and infantrymen.[106]

Although technical issues were doubtless influential, it was also true that the Spanish army's previous experiences had not fostered the tactical integration of both arms. This was tried during the Third Carlist War, but the outcome was not satisfactory because the infantry was very fearful of suffering casualties by friendly artillery fire. The colonial wars at the end of the nineteenth century saw a piecemeal use of the artillery. One or

[103] Ibid., pp. 82-3.
[104] Gallego, Campaña del Rif, pp. 304-5.
[105] Avilés, 'Enseñanzas', pp. 257-9; Gallego, Campaña del Rif, pp. 309-10.
[106] Burguete, La guerra y el hombre, pp. 244-5.

two pieces were attached to the individual columns and they were often used at point-blank range. Thus the Spanish officers lacked any chance (or saw no need) to develop a doctrine about combined arms.[107]

c) The aftermath: the 1913 infantry regulations.

The provisional doctrine of 1908 turned into the official one in 1913. The 1913 Infantry Tactical Regulations actually emphasized the spirit of the offensive with moral factors in the foreground. This seems somewhat odd after the experience of 1909. So far, this research has not found official evidence to explain the matter. It is plausible that the colonial character of the Melilla operations justified a reluctance to alter the official doctrine, despite the fact that the native musketry had proved - admittedly on a limited scale - the effectiveness of rifled small arms. But, on the other hand, the campaign could provide arguments to strengthen the role of morale and offensive spirit in the infantry regulations as well.

For instance, Lieutenant-colonel Avilés remarked that, in order to stiffen their fighting spirit, the troops had been exposed by the commanders to the dangers of the firing line with little concern about their vulnerability. They also attacked before the preparatory fire had broken the enemy. Avilés admitted that such a method was dear in casualties during the first weeks, but claimed that it was economical in the end. For the Spanish soldier thus learnt to fight his enemy and soon obtained a manifest moral superiority which contributed to the conclusion of the war.[108]

This last remark is interesting because it shows that Avilés,

[107] Critón, pp. 150, 250-1, 260.
[108] Avilés, 'Enseñanzas', pp. 100-1.

whatever his criticisms of the official doctrine (see above), shared the image of warfare in terms of morale and psychological factors so frequent in the contemporary professional literature. This vision has been called the paradigm of 'the psychological battlefield' by the historian Tim Travers.[109] Within this paradigm, any concerns about fire power are secondary to maintaining morale and securing a decisive psychological supremacy. Actually Avilés' views on the moral strength of the offensive and the need for accepting losses resembled the spirit inspiring the 1913 regulations.

The new infantry regulations did not offer significant changes in tactical procedures, but a heavier emphasis on morale and the offensive without regard to casualties could be noticed by any reader. The 1908 version of article 4 talked of the need for infantrymen to have a 'high spirit' tout court. In 1913 the infantry regulations stated that the infantry needed 'to be inspired by a constant offensive and attacking spirit, which carries them along to reach the enemy and conquer him whatever the cost...'[110]

Fire and movement seemed to be the accepted doctrine in 1908: 'fire is very important and predominant, but the advancing movement, impetuous and overwhelming, is the decisive [means]; the latter will only be possible and fruitful when an effective fire has prepared and made it possible.'[111] However, the 1913 regulations stated that fire just made movement 'easier', and

[109] Tim [H.E.] Travers, The Killing Ground. The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare, 1900-1918 (London, 1990), pp. 48-50.
[110] '[E]star animada de un constante espíritu ofensivo y de ataque, que le arrastre a llegar al contrario y a vencerle a todo trance...' Reglamento Táctico de Infantería (1913) (hereafter RTI 1913), article 4.
[111] '[E]l fuego es importantísimo y preponderante, pero el movimiento de avance, impetuoso y arrollador, es el decisivo; éste sólo será posible y de fructuosos resultados cuando un fuego eficaz lo haya preparado y hecho posible.' RTI 1908, article 260.

added: 'only through movement will fire get all its development and its greatest effectiveness.'[112] This article suggests that fire was a useful, supporting means for movement but was assigned a secondary status in relation to the latter, since fire was also dependent on movement for its effectiveness and was not deemed a decisive element. The underrating of fire power also meant a devaluation of tactical defence. The 1913 regulations devoted eighty nine articles to offensive combat and only twenty two to defensive fighting.[113]

The 1913 regulations also included a new article on the need to persist with the attack.[114] This idea was shared by other sections of the military. A commentator on the regulations wrote that 'the determined and forceful offensive is not enough to conquer, if, besides, it is not joined by the features of stubbornness and endurance in attack.'[115] This persistence involved a will to accept great losses, which Captain Gascueña explained this way: 'It is necessary to fight for the decisive victory, even if we must suffer more casualties than the enemy, and one must bear in mind for this...that the attacker suffers during the fight many more casualties than the defender, but he wins in the end.'[116] This was in fact one of the contemporary solutions to the problem of the tactical offensive against increased fire power, which Captain Dolla had already voiced almost a decade before: 'And if we have no other alternative, let us march forward, throwing lives

[112] '[A]sí como únicamente por el movimiento podrá el fuego adquirir todo su desarrollo y su máxima eficacia.' RTI 1913, article 248.
[113] From article 263 to 352, and from article 353 to 375, respectively.
[114] RTI 1913, article 5.
[115] '[L]a ofensiva enérgica y decidida no es suficiente para lograr el triunfo, si no va acompañada, además, de los caracteres de tenacidad y persistencia en el ataque.' Emilio González y P. Villamil, 'El nuevo Reglamento táctico de Infantería', Memorial de Infantería (hereafter MI), III, 34 (October 1914), p. 312.
[116] 'Se ha de combatir por la victoria decisiva, aunque para ello tengamos que sufrir más bajas que el contrario, y para esto hay que tener en cuenta...que el atacante experimenta durante la lucha muchas más bajas que el defensor, pero al fin vence.' Epifanio Gascueña, 'El fuego y la maniobra como medios de combate', MI, III, 34 (October 1914), p. 321.

into...the hearth of victory: war is not a sensitive matter...'[117] According to Gascueña, there was no other alternative but to face up to the modern battlefield:

> Protection must also be conceived within a limit. He who thinks that great tactical successes can be achieved in modern warfare without great losses makes a big mistake. He needs to admit resolutely that troops which are not afraid of losses enjoy a huge superiority over all those which look to saving their blood...[118]

Therefore, trenches were only admissible in exceptional cases when it was appropriate to guard conquered ground rather than advancing.[119] Actually the Spanish infantrymen would have found it difficult to dig such trenches on their own, because the Spanish army was one of the two armies in Europe (the other was the Turkish army) where the infantry still had not got an issue individual trenching tool by 1915.[120]

This chapter has shown how the Spanish army passed from the fire power-based tactical doctrine of the 1890s to a doctrine of outright offensive in the early 1910s. The wars of 1895-98 did not seem to weigh much in this transformation, since they generated debate but no change in the official doctrine. On the contrary, a foreign conflict, the Russo-Japanese War, probably did more to tilt the balance towards the offensive, which found full expression in the 1913 infantry tactical regulations. This suggests that Spanish military thinking after 1900 became more interested in following foreign doctrines than in assessing and

[117] 'Y si no tenemos otro recurso, avancemos, echando vidas...en el hogar de la victoria: la guerra no es cosa sensible...' Dolla, 'Conferencias del Círculo Militar', p. 70; T.H.E. Travers, 'Technology, Tactics, and Morale: Jean de Bloch, the Boer War, and British Military Theory, 1900-1914', Journal of Modern History, 51, 2 (June 1979), pp. 272-3.
[118] 'La protección también debe concebirse en un cierto límite. El que crea que en la guerra moderna se pueden obtener grandes éxitos tácticos sin grandes pérdidas comete un grande error. Precisa admitir resueltamente que una tropa que no teme las pérdidas posee una enorme superioridad sobre todas las que buscan ahorrar su sangre...' Epifanio Gascueña, Empleo de la fortificación ligera en la ofensiva (Madrid, 1915), p. 17.
[119] Ibid., p. 19.
[120] Ibid., p. 7 fn 1.

learning from the Spanish army's own experiences in the colonial wars. Insofar as the Spanish military did not have any recent significant experience of fighting against a regular army, looking for guidance abroad was a logical step. But the lack of interest in the experiences of the wars of the 1890s, despite the fact that military involvement in Morocco seemed possible, reveals a poor professional foresight. Thus the Spanish infantry went into action in 1909 with tactical regulations which were hardly adequate for a campaign against an irregular enemy.

4.- MORALE AND TECHNOLOGY, 1899-1913: THE SPANISH MILITARY MIND AND THE MACHINE GUN.

Technology was transforming warfare by the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the military establishment still thought in terms of a battlefield where psychological factors maintained their importance, it had to cope with technological innovation all the same. The machine gun provides a case study of such a process. Due to its mechanical production of high volumes of fire power, this weapon symbolized the new kind of warfare. The study of the debate within the Spanish military about the machine gun's importance and tactical role sheds light on the problems of implementing technological innovation.

1. The psychological image of warfare.

a) Warfare as an exercise of willpower.

Captain Dolla, in a lecture published in a professional journal in early 1903, defined modern war as a natural phenomenon in the life of nations; it had a passionate, moral nature, and affected all the citizens to the highest degree. Because of this extended popular involvement, war disturbed the country's life so much that it could not last long. It must be ended quickly through a vigorous, decisive action aimed at the moral destruction of the enemy (the physical one was an inevitable outcome of the former). The goal was to achieve fast, decisive, moral successes through the physical exertions of the fighting men, which were 'supported and encouraged, above all, by great firmness in their hearts and absolute contempt for their own lives.'[1]

Arguments like this endorsed the idea of war and battle as a

[1] '[S]ostenidas y estimuladas, principalmente, por una gran entereza de su corazón y un absoluto desprecio de su vida.' Angel Dolla, 'Concepto e importancia de la Caballería en abstracto', RTIC, XIII, 1 (January-June 1903), pp. 376-7.

psychological conflict, a clash of wills, which the material factors were subordinated to. Thus Burguete wrote that 'war is a clash of two wills rather than a clash of weapons: the strongest one beats the weakest.'[2] The origins of this concept can be traced back to the works of essayists of the nineteenth century such as Joseph de Maistre, Clausewitz and du Picq, whose thinking was to be used as a justification of the doctrine of the offensive at all costs.[3] Even essayists who realized the increased importance of fire power shared this view: 'Battles are lost from moral reasons, not material ones...', wrote Banús.[4] This idea was also understood as a negation of any revolution caused by technological progress, which altered the essentials of war (i.e. the moral forces), as writers like Ivan Bloch argued.[5]

Something like moral forces were what, according to a contemporary critic, the Spanish troops in Santiago de Cuba were short of. It was true that they had not collapsed. They made a gallant stand against overwhelming odds, while the Americans often went to ground under Spanish fire. But the latter advanced boldly wherever the danger did not loom large, and did not hesitate to send patrols and small columns far ahead. On the contrary, despite their fine displays under fire, the Spaniards suffered from paralysis outside the firefight. This critic attributed this alleged unwillingness to attack to a lack of 'moral force'; he defined this shortage as a sort of accidental state of mind derived from the lack of strong patriotic and military spirit

[2] '[L]a guerra es un choque de dos voluntades antes que un choque de armas: la más fuerte vence a la más flaca.' Burguete, Mi rebeldía, pp. 72-3.
[3] Isaiah Berlin, The Hedgehog and the Fox. An Essay on Tolstoi's View of History (London, 1988), pp. 51-4; Michael Howard's introductory essay in Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, 1976); Possony and Mantoux, pp. 206-17, 227-8.
[4] 'Las batallas se pierden moral, no materialmente...' Banús, Reflexiones, p. 55. Clausewitz (in Book IV, Chapter 4 of On War) wrote that '[t]he decision rests chiefly on the state of morale, which, in cases where the victor has lost as much as the vanquished, has always been the single decisive factor.' Clausewitz, p. 231.
[5] Burguete, Mi rebeldía, pp. 77-80.

(this allegedly was a common feature of the contemporary Spanish society and institutions) and of will to win (the Spanish troops fought just enough to satisfy military honour, thinking that they could do nothing to alter the final result of the campaign).[6]

Not that casualties did not matter. The morale breakdown leading to defeat was certainly caused by physical losses. But how many losses were needed to break an army depended on its state of mind or, to use contemporary words, its 'moral energy'. An army could accept defeat after suffering a few casualties, and the next day could keep on fighting and achieve victory despite a heavier loss. Lieutenant-colonel Banús pointed out that modern firearms, despite their improved performance, were not deadlier than the older ones, as comparative percentages of killed and wounded in battle proved. Actually the casualty percentages diminished in more recent wars (e.g. the Franco-Prussian War, the Boer War). Banús put down this divergence between increasing weapon performance and decreasing casualties either to a decline of military spirit in modern armies, or to its insufficient growth in parallel to the difficulties of modern combat. So the reason for defeat was not the power of weapons, but the weakness of troops who could not endure the stress of modern warfare and who therefore broke with a lesser number of casualties.[7]

Actually Banús was aware that the troops had responded to growing fire power by means of dispersion, but he had also thought it inmaterial to his point above. The dispersion on the battlefield meant that the percentage of casualties suffered by a whole army per day of fighting declined. But whenever a commander

[6] Efeele, Desastre, pp. 163-7. Navarro also mentioned reduced morale as a reason of the defensive attitude in Santiago de Cuba, in addition to a local inferiority in numbers and the shortage of field artillery: 'Observaciones', p. 166.
[7] Banús, Reflexiones, pp. 55-62, 65.

forgot the lesson and ordered his troops to advance steadily across open ground, the latter suffered heavily. The remarkable point is that the soldiers' sensible answer to a more lethal environment was seen as a sign of moral softness.[8]

What modern weapons had created was the 'empty battlefield'. On it, the elements which traditionally lessened the effects of fear and stress on the troops disappeared. Contemporary military essayists like Navarro and Banús recognized that the soldier could no longer see his enemy, could not assess the effects of his own fire and did not feel the physical contact of his comrades. If battle was a matter of morale, what troops needed in order to keep up their will to win under these conditions was, above all, more moral training in order to foster their courage, discipline and sense of duty.[9] Thus, Captain Gallego concluded, 'the soldier, far from staying the selfish man of current times, turns into a <u>being</u> deserving admiration and respect...'[10]

b) <u>Social evolution and the problems of military service</u>.

The military essayists of this period saw in the strengthening of fighting morale the answer to the challenge of fire power. However, at the same time, these essayists denied or doubted the capacity of conscript armies (like the Spanish one) to improve the military virtues of their troops. On the one hand, the terms of service in the colours were getting shorter; on the other hand, there was a belief that the social conditions of civilized, modern nations tended to lessen the military spirit of conscripts. Banús complained of the spreading of anti-militarist doctrines in the working classes, but he also deplored the 'passive' anti-

[8] Creveld, <u>Technology and War</u>, pp. 173-4.
[9] Navarro, 'Lo moral', pp. 15-8; Banús, <u>Reflexiones</u>, p. 65.
[10] '[E]l soldado, lejos de ser el hombre egoista de los tiempos actuales, se convierte en un <u>ser</u> digno de admiración y respeto...' Gallego Ramos, 'El municionamiento', p. 28.

militarism of the bourgeois middle class and the well-off, which evaded conscription through payment in cash or substitute purchase. Nevertheless, he reckoned that the alternatives for Spain were not much better (Banús was writing before the 1912 military service act). An all-volunteer army was too expensive a solution, whereas universal military service would just add another group of disgruntled recruits to those already conscripted. Only a revival of patriotism in Spain would allow the development of a reliable conscript army.[11]

A Major Calero also argued about the disintegrating effects of class differences for the military units' cohesion if universal military service was implemented. The modern, egalitarian society would never adapt to the gap between officers and other ranks, who had different duties, rights and functions, and therefore were totally separate. Class differences would make impossible any comradeship among the rank and file; moreover, the educated conscripts would bring the external atmosphere of social and academic indiscipline into the barracks and transmit a rebellious spirit to the uneducated mass. Calero even classified social classes according to their warlike aptitudes: the best soldiers were peasants, followed at some distance by 'craftsmen' (presumably industrial workers), while well-off people were the very worst.[12]

This thinking on the problems of universal military service reflected distrust and pessimism about the nature of industrial, positivist society and its manpower - even in a country like Spain, which started her industrial revolution late, and whose

[11] Carlos Banús y Comas, El arte de la guerra a principios del siglo XX (Madrid, 1907), pp. 394, 399-402, 407, 412, 415-6; Banús, Reflexiones, p. 65.
[12] Juan Calero Ortega, 'Ideas sobre organización militar', RTIC, XIV, 2 (July-December 1904), pp. 452-4.

army drafted many, if not most, conscripts from the countryside. Civilization seemed to weaken the qualities of man for war. An infantry officer and teacher at the Infantry Academy, Lieutenant Ruíz-Fornells, had already espoused this idea in 1894. He stated that the development of industry and commerce, and the interest in other civil activities, plus the prevailing positivist thinking, had diminished Spain's military spirit.[13] This line of thought also helps to explain the scorn displayed by the Spanish press about the military virtues of the more industrialized United States before the Spanish-American War.[14] The political-military newspaper La Correspondencia Militar echoed these views in the months before the outbreak of war, when its articles often referred contemptuously to the Americans as a 'nation of merchants'. One of its contributors even alluded to a lack of manliness when he wrote about the ridiculous war scare in the United States, a nation which had much more wealth and 'more people (I hesitate to say men) than Spain.'[15] And there was little subtlety in an anonymous feature whose writer stated that war was also waged by means of 'dignity and a sense of self-respect, plus a thing which the Yankees have never had, and therefore it has been impossible for them to store it in factories or banks, but there is more than enough of this thing in Spain. This thing is pantalones [trousers, meaning guts].'[16]

The defeat in the Spanish-American War might have changed these attitudes about the military virtues of an industrial society's soldiers. However, there is no sign of such a change in the

[13] Enrique Ruíz-Fornells, La educación moral del soldado (Toledo, 1894), p. 50.
[14] Isern, pp. 371-2; Payne, Politics, p. 81.
[15] '[M]ás personas (no me atrevo a decir hombres) que España.' Claudio, 'El miedo yankee', LCM, 24 February 1898.
[16] '[D]ignidad y vergüenza y otra cosa que no han tenido jamás los yankees, por lo cual les ha sido imposible almacenarla en fábricas ni en bancos. Y es precisamente lo que sobra en España. Pantalones.' 'Saetas', LCM, 12 March 1898.

sources surveyed by this writer. There are a couple of plausible reasons for this absence of change. On the one hand, the fighting on land was too brief and limited, and the American expeditionary armies did not win any clear-cut victory (in Cuba, the American troops needed a whole day to expel an enemy one tenth of its size from a line of weak field fortifications). On the other hand, according to a contemporary writer mentioned above, the Spanish troops suffered from a previous moral decay which offset their military virtues.[17] The defeat of 1898 could also be seen within a larger context of military decline of the over-civilized European nations, whose scions were no longer good soldiers. This was the stand of Major Calero, who compared the Spanish overseas defeat to European setbacks in other contemporary campaigns against non-European enemies. Although he did not mention them explicitly, Calero was referring to the setbacks of the British army in the Boer War (1899-1902), the Italians in Abyssinia (1896) and the Russians in the war against Japan (1904-1905).[18]

c) Ricardo Burguete: searching for industrial age warriors.

It has been mentioned above that there was a widespread belief in Europe, related to social Darwinism, that the modern civilized society's soldier was unable to withstand the stress of modern warfare and conform to traditional standards of military virtue.[19] Examples of this pessimistic thinking are provided by that prolific essayist of the first years of the twentieth century, Ricardo Burguete. The influence of anti-positivist irrationalism is very clear in his book Así hablaba Zorrapastro, published about 1903. As the title reveals, this work was inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra and praised the way the German

[17] Efeele, Desastre, pp. 163-7.
[18] Calero, 'Ideas sobre organización', pp. 454-5.
[19] Travers, 'Technology, Tactics, and Morale', pp. 266-7.

philosopher exalted war and warriors.[20]

According to Burguete, civilization wore out the warlike qualities of man so much as to render conscription harmful for armies. Civilization also turned war into a business for everybody, since technology could turn any man into a mere weapon operator. But despite its importance, technology did not always transform war into a matter of calculation. Therefore, military art sought the solution of conflicts in the manliness, habits and morality of peoples; in other words, in what Burguete called the warlike education. This education had to be acquired at home during the childhood and teenage years. However, civilization despised this sort of education: it showed war as something horrible and paid homage to progress, not to force. Children were punished whenever they displayed willpower, courage and daring, and taught to loathe weapons and the use of force. Thus they reached the conscription age fully convinced that military service was a stage to pass with resignation and - in case of war - by taking as few risks as possible.[21]

On the contrary, what had to be emphasized were the virtues strengthening the character of man. As Burguete wrote later: 'Our cult must be the cult of courage and heroism.'[22] He praised the contribution of the Japanese warrior's code of behaviour (bushido) to the Japanese victories in Manchuria in 1904-1905. The bushido was, in Burguete's view, a manifestation of the warlike, heroic ethos which true soldiers had to assume.[23]

[20] Ricardo Burguete, Así hablaba Zorrapastro (Valencia, c.1903).
[21] Ibid., pp. 46, 54-62, 64.
[22] 'Nuestro culto ha de ser el culto del valor y del heroismo.' Ricardo Burguete, Preparación de las tropas para la guerra (nuevo Vegecio). Estudios de ética militar (Madrid, 1905), p. 128.
[23] Ibid., p. 128. It is noteworthy that General Millán Astray, founder of the offensive-minded Spanish Legion (an elite unit of Spanish and foreign volunteers), wrote years later that he had been inspired by bushido to shape the unit's fighting spirit: see Millán Astray's introduction in Inazo Nitobë, El Bushido (el alma del Japón) (Madrid, 1941), pp. 9-10.

Contemporary mass armies neither got reliable, 'war-educated' short-service conscripts nor could hope to educate them in the colours. According to Burguete, discipline would not be enough to keep the cohesion of conscript mass armies once in battle. On the modern battlefield, without the close leadership of their officers and non-commissioned officers, exposed to the play of inconstant emotions, the conscripts would need very little stimulus to be overtaken by panic and transformed into a crowd in flight. Incidentally, this would also make cavalry an important arm on the battlefield again: their shock action would cause, or take advantage of, the frequent panics in the enemy masses.[24]

Civilization produced smaller numbers of able men for war or made necessary a longer time to train real soldiers. On the other hand, Burguete argued, progress, by improving weapons, emphasized quality rather than quantity. The performance and complexity of modern weapons were ever increasing, so the soldier should be more robust and skilled as well.[25] However, this was not possible with the short terms of conscription (not more than three years). Besides, the law made every man a soldier whatever his aptitudes; since these were no longer thought to be important, the soldier turned into an ancillary element of the rifle, only trained in musketry.[26] Burguete proposed a professional standing army, made up of volunteers matching the standards for modern warfare; compulsory service would be limited to a case of serious threat to the country. However, Burguete then contradicted himself, since he stated that, as a preparation for this contingency, the population would be given a military or warlike education from childhood.[27]

[24] Burguete, Zorrapastro, pp. 48-9; on crowd-like behaviour in battle, see John Keegan, The Face of Battle (London, 1976), pp. 172-4.
[25] Burguete, Zorrapastro, pp. 46, 49-50.
[26] Burguete, Mi rebeldía, pp. 94-7.
[27] Burguete, Zorrapastro, p. 51.

Thus Burguete rejected conscription but he put forward, at the same time, a sort of pre-military teaching whose lack was supposed to render conscription ineffective. So, if the nation's manpower became 'educated' for military service, why could not it be conscripted then? Perhaps Burguete thought that only an invasion of the realm would galvanize his compatriots enough to join the colours willingly. If so, this thinking would reflect once again his low estimation of the modern man's fighting spirit.

To sum up, Burguete's ideas embraced two inter-related, contemporary solutions to the problem of the tactical offensive facing the increased fire power of modern artillery and infantry weapons. One of these solutions was the strengthening of the moral and psychological qualities necessary for victory in war (character, sense of duty, 'warlike education', the cult of courage); the other sought to produce a new, much better trained and highly enthusiastic soldier able to overcome the new weapons' effects on morale and move forward on the modern battlefield (Burguete's ideal of the professional soldier).[28] Many of Burguete's writings displayed views too radical for him to be considered representative of the Spanish army's mainstream thinking. But the evidence shows that Burguete must be valued rather as an extreme point of reference on ideas which were discussed in the military at that time.[29]

For example, ideas about the need for increased moral qualities were certainly widespread in the Spanish military literature. A reason for this might be the influence of the education in the

[28] Dennis E. Showalter, 'Army and Society in Imperial Germany: The Pains of Modernization', Journal of Contemporary History, 18, 4 (October 1983), p. 587; Travers, 'Technology, Tactics, and Morale', pp. 272-4.
[29] A line of argument standing against the all-volunteer army and for universal military service (but with some privileges for well-to-do conscripts) is found, for instance, in Pío Suárez Inclán, El problema del reclutamiento en España (Madrid, 1905), pp. 44-57, 81-98.

Spanish military academies, whose teaching exalted high spiritual values, shaped within a nationalist framework - which, in turn, was based on the military glories of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[30] The military also sympathised with the idea of the need for 'regenerating' morally a decaying Spanish society: a need which seemed highlighted by the defeat of 1898 and was promoted by contemporary intellectuals and authors such as Ramiro de Maeztu (who corresponded with Burguete) or Joaquín Costa.[31]

Another influence were contemporary widespread social Darwinist ideas, according to which the country whose population had the highest moral qualities would be successful in the struggle for survival among nations.[32] Burguete was a rather open spokesman of such ideas and, in one of his early works, made explicit mention of Darwin. Burguete compared war to the struggle for existence due to the inequality between the growth of species and the availability of resources, when the imperative of one's own survival obliged the strongest to eat up the weakest.[33] Burguete wrote a few years later: 'A nation cannot live beside other vigorous nations without accepting the struggle for life which the latter impose on the former.'[34] Backward or weaker nations had to disappear in order to allow the natural, selective progress of the rest of the species.[35] Burguete also compared (in interesting contrast with the attitudes towards the Americans before the 1898 war) warlike spirit to the spirit of commercial initiative, since the conquest of markets had become a 'physiological' need of

[30] Cardona, p. 23.
[31] Bachoud, p. 140.
[32] Travers, 'Technology, Tactics, and Morale', pp. 282-3.
[33] Ricardo Burguete, ¡La guerra! Cuba (diario de un testigo) (Barcelona, 1902), pp. 41, 111.
[34] 'Un pueblo no puede vivir en la vecindad de otros pueblos vigorosos sin aceptar el esfuerzo para vivir que los otros pueblos le imponen.' Ricardo Burguete, El problema militar (España ante los grandes imperios del porvenir) (Palma de Mallorca, 1905), p. 12.
[35] Ricardo Burguete, Morbo nacional. Vida defensiva (Madrid, c. 1905), p. 9.

nations.[36] Actually he devoted a whole book (Morbo nacional. Vida defensiva) to denouncing the 'defensive', protectionist attitudes of Spain's economy, which could only lead - as in war - to defeat and annihilation.

Among all this literature stressing the psychological and moral factors in warfare, an exception which deserves at least a mention in passing were the ideas of José Marvá, an engineer officer. He had no doubts on the increase of destructiveness brought by technology. Against this, courage and manliness were of no use. The human elements which could decide battles in the past were no longer useful unless they were complementary to - and based on - the power of modern weapons.[37] A scholar and teacher in issues related to ordnance and military engineering, Marvá was, according to Alonso Baquer, the most prominent figure in advocating the technological modernization of the Spanish army in the last decades of the nineteenth century. However, after the defeat of 1898, his ideas were the last token of a tradition of reformist learned thinking born from a scholarly, analytical approach to the military problems. This tradition had virtually disappeared by 1917, and, indeed, Marvá's concerns turned towards social welfare issues from the early years of the twentieth century on.[38]

2. The Spanish army and the machine gun: early trials and organizational debates (1867-1908).

a) The machine gun in the Spanish army up to 1900.

The Spanish army first tested a Gatling machine gun in 1867; as

[36] Burguete, El problema militar, p. 10.
[37] José Marvá y Mayer, Estudio histórico de los medios de ataque y defensa (Madrid, 1903), pp. 391-2. An engineer officer, Marvá (1846-1937) spent many years in teaching and scientific research appointments; after 1900, though he still remained in active service until the 1910s, his career was dominated by civil appointments related to social welfare issues.
[38] Miguel Alonso Baquer, 'José Marvá (1846-1937), entre la tecnología militar y las reformas sociales', in José Luis García Delgado (ed.), Economía española, cultura y sociedad: homenaje a Juan Velarde Fuertes, 3 vol. (Madrid, 1992), II. 210-1, II. 219-20. The present writer is grateful to Miguel Alonso Baquer, who kindly sent a pamphlet version of this paper.

a result, the Artillery Board ordered an extension of the trials by attaching machine guns to an artillery regiment (one machine gun per battery).[39] If the trials were successful, the other regiments would be equipped the same way. However, this plan was cancelled after the appearance of the Cristophe-Montigny machine gun and new trials of this model were carried out.

A decision to create six batteries (with six Cristophe-Montigny machine guns each) was finally made in April 1871. But that project was cancelled as well and actually only a single battery of four machine guns, attached to an artillery regiment, was formed in May 1872. All the same, the military authorities ordered up to forty Cristophe-Montigny machine guns, which would be made in a Spanish factory (apparently, only fourteen guns were completed). Nevertheless, the Spanish army carried out trials of another Gatling machine gun in 1874, and compared it with the French model. The Artillery Board judged the machine gun more useful in the defence than in the attack and, if larger numbers of this weapon were ordered, recommended the Gatling model, which offered a higher rate of fire and less encumbrances (actually three Gatling machine guns were used in the Cuban colonial war of 1868-78).

However, the disappointing role of the French army's machine guns in the Franco-Prussian War generated a wave of mistrust and scorn towards the new weapon. This wave also reached Spain, whose army forgot any idea of field use of the machine gun, and the Cristophe-Montigny unit was disbanded by 1874.[40] The existing

[39] This summary of the history of the machine gun in the Spanish army from 1867 to 1898 is based on the following works of Luis de la Gándara Marsella: Ametralladoras de campaña en el Ejército español (Madrid, 1906), pp. 3-7; Estudios acerca de ametralladoras (Madrid, 1908), pp. 247-51; and ibid., 2nd edition (Madrid, 1910), pp. 287-9. An infantry officer, de la Gándara (1880-1928) taught at the Infantry Academy and the Central Firing School and took part in the writing of new infantry regulations in the 1920s.

[40] Ministerio de la Guerra, Artillería, Comisión de Experiencias, Informe sobre 'Las experiencias

weapons were assigned to fortresses, where they were joined by a few Swedish Palkrantz-Nordenfelt machine guns after 1881. Despite the appearance of the Maxim model (the first reliable automatic machine gun) in 1884, the Spanish lack of interest lasted until the outbreak of the last Cuban war. Twelve Maxim-Nordenfelt machine guns on wheeled carriages were bought and sent to Cuba in 1896. However, their performance was poor: the Maxims were not adapted to the Spanish issue rifle cartridge and this caused frequent jammings. The problem was not solved until the machine guns were sent back to Spain after the war against the United States. Once they were adapted, eight machine guns were assigned to the fortifications of Ceuta and Melilla and the remaining four to the Central Firing School.

The American army had used a few Gatling machine guns against the Spaniards in Santiago de Cuba. According to a Spanish source, the Gatlings performed reasonably well, though their effectiveness was exaggerated by their commanding officer.[41] The Spanish sources did not mention the machine guns as a significant factor in the outcome of the fighting. All this suggests that the Spanish army was not impressed enough to press forward the procurement of more machine guns.

After 1898 the machine gun seemed to be underrated. A military essayist, Luis de la Gándara, commented sadly by 1906: 'we neither have machine guns nor are there reasons to believe that we will own them soon but, on the contrary, there are many reasons to presume that there is no atmosphere for the present for the organization of those weapons in our army.' He added that, in his view, budget matters were not the only cause of this situation,

efectuadas con diversos modelos de ametralladoras' (primera parte), 29 April 1908, AGMS 2/1/9.
[41] Lorenzo Cabrera Mac-Kintosh, Ametralladoras (Madrid, c. 1911), pp. 33-4.

but he refrained from mentioning the others.[42]

b) <u>Corporate procrastination, 1900-1907</u>.

Actually the Spanish army did keep an interest in the machine gun. In January 1902, the board of the Central Firing School pointed out that the major European armies had carried out experiments with machine guns and that, by that time, Germany, France, Britain, Switzerland and Russia had organized machine gun units. Though there were still doubts about their role on the battlefield, machine guns were to be highly valuable weapons due to their volume of fire (the board mentioned that, after trials in France, one machine gun was reckoned equal to two hundred riflemen). The board of the school urged the military authorities to pay serious attention to the issue and suggested its study in two stages. On the one hand, the Central Firing School would carry out the trials concerning the tactical use and firing methods of the weapon; on the other hand, the Artillery Experiments Commission would carry out the technical trials to decide the model to be chosen.[43] The professional board of the artillery corps, after studying the proposal, stated several weeks later that experimenting with machine guns was its responsibility, through the Artillery Experiments Commission.[44] The professional board got its way, since the Artillery Experiments Commission carried out the trials alone, although these were not undertaken seriously until 1904. In this year, several foreign models were acquired after a fact-finding journey of the commission abroad

[42] '[N]i contamos con ametralladoras ni aparecen motivos para creer que en breve hemos de poseerlas, sino que por lo contrario, hay muchas razones para suponer que <u>no existe ambiente por ahora</u> para la organización de aquellas armas en nuestro Ejército.' Gándara, <u>Ametralladoras de campaña</u>, pp. 7-8.

[43] Artillería, Escuela Central de Tiro, Junta Facultativa, Informando sobre la necesidad de experimentar ametralladoras y cañones automáticos de pequeño calibre, 10 January 1902, AGMS 2/1/7.

[44] Artillería, Junta Facultativa, Informe sobre 'Necesidad de experimentar ametralladoras y cañones automáticos de pequeños calibres', 27 February 1902, AGMS 2/1/7.

during 1903 and early 1904.[45] But the commission displayed a rather limited enthusiasm for the machine gun. Though it admitted the weapon's effectiveness in some particular cases, the commission stated that the usefulness of the machine gun had diminished after the widespread adoption of quick-firing artillery by all the armies. Indeed, its evaluation of the machine gun continued mainly because of foreign armies' acceptance of the weapon.[46] This last point suggests that the Spanish artillery corps' own assessment of the machine gun might not have justified such trials. The professional board of the artillery corps had actually proposed in 1902 to delay any decision on the machine gun.[47]

The over-thoroughness of the experimental trials held back the introduction of the machine gun. The Artillery Experiments Commission alleged that mechanical unreliability of the models was the cause of the slowness in the trials, which therefore delayed the definitive adoption of the machine gun by the Spanish army.[48] This search for mechanical excellence could be reasonable from a technical viewpoint. However, it was also harmful when armies all over Europe had already started equipping themselves with the models available. Indeed, an artillery officer, Captain Jevenois, urged the army to accelerate the studies to adopt machine guns after the experience of the Russo-Japanese War.[49]

[45] Ministerio de la Guerra, Artillería, Comisión de Experiencias, Informe sobre 'Las experiencias efectuadas con diversos modelos de ametralladoras' (primera parte), 29 April 1908, AGMS 2/1/9.
[46] Resumen de los trabajos realizados por la Comisión de Experiencias de Artillería durante el año 1905 (Madrid, 1906), pp. 24-5. The copy used by this writer is enclosed in Memoria, Revista de Inspección del Ministerio de la Guerra, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/15.
[47] Artillería, Junta Facultativa, Informe sobre 'Experiencias con una ametralladora Hotchkiss', 20 December 1902, AGMS 2/1/7.
[48] Resumen de los trabajos realizados por la Comisión de Experiencias de Artillería durante el año 1906 (Madrid, 1907), p. 50. The copy used by this writer is enclosed in Memoria, Revista de Inspección del Ministerio de la Guerra, 1907, SHM-CAD 8/15.
[49] Pedro Jevenois, 'Consecuencias tácticas de la guerra ruso-japonesa', EM, XXVI, 1 (January-June 1907), p. 422. Jevenois (1878-1941) was an observer in the Russo-Japanese War (1904); he joined the nationalist side in the Civil War and was GOC 24th Division and artillery commander of the Army of the South.

Another problem was the corporate jealousy within the Spanish army. The artillerymen had little enthusiasm for the machine gun, but they had taken charge of its trials anyway. The machine gun was of secondary importance for the artillery corps, and this might explain the leisurely attitude of the commission - though it had assumed the sole responsibility for the trials within the army as a whole. On the other hand, the artillerymen prided themselves on their technical knowledge and their responsibilities in ordnance issues. So, in order to preserve their corporate prestige, they were unwilling to accept that other corps take part in the trials.

Even after the adoption of an infantry machine gun, the artillery corps did not want to give up its hold over other corps' weaponry. The Artillery Experiments Commission stated in 1908 that the artillery corps had to assume responsibilities within the organization of machine gun units, since the performance of these weapons depended on their mechanical working, and technical ordnance issues were handled by the corps.[50] About the same period (sometime from 1908 to the mid-1910s), the Artillery Experiments Commission refused to display the newly acquired machine gun model during a course in the infantry section of the Central Firing School unless an artillery officer was in charge of the presentation and explanations.[51]

c) <u>Who should operate the machine gun</u>?

One reason for the scepticism and the early unsteady policy of the army about the machine gun was doubtless the ill-defined status of this weapon during the early stages of its development.

[50] Ministerio de la Guerra, Artillería, Comisión de Experiencias, Informe sobre 'Las experiencias efectuadas con diversos modelos de ametralladoras' (segunda parte), 29 April 1908, AGMS 2/1/9.
[51] Equis, II. 116.

Due to their technical characteristics, the first models of machine guns could not be classified neatly as an infantry, cavalry or artillery weapon, or as a new, independent tactical arm. An artillery officer, Lieutenant-colonel Brull, summed up the hybrid features of the early machine guns: they fired infantry rifle ammunition; they were crew-served weapons and organized in sections and batteries as were the artillery pieces; and they were best suited to a quick and opportune use on the battlefield as the cavalry were. This meant that the infantrymen disliked them because of their similarity in organization and baggage to the artillery and the nuisance they caused for movement. The cavalry also thought that they hindered their mobility and dashing spirit, whereas the artillery disliked the rifle-like performance of their fire and still remembered the French machine guns' fiasco in 1870. Moreover, according to Brull, every arm thought that admitting the machine gun's support within its ranks was a sign of military decline or feebleness.[52] So it is not surprising that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the teaching on machine guns in the Infantry Academy formed part of a heterogeneous subject on 'Ordnance'.[53]

But Brull's views about the alleged unwillingness of the arms to accept the machine gun were not shared by other artillerymen. Major Lossada was amazed that the artillery officers of foreign armies which had already adopted the machine gun handed it over to the other arms, though it was a weapon whose tactics and technical features made it suitable for the artillery. And Lieutenant Jevenois argued that machine guns should be operated by artillerymen, because if these weapons were assigned to infantry

[52] José Brull, 'Las ametralladoras en los campos de batalla', Memorial de Artillería (hereafter MA), LVIII, 1 (January-June 1903), pp. 556-7.
[53] Gándara, Ametralladoras de campaña, pp. 30-1.

and cavalry units, the latter's mobility would be restrained.[54]

The artillery corps was indeed loath to give up its corporate interests. The Artillery Central Board censored an article written by Major Lossada for the corps journal because he stated that machine guns were not artillery weapons only. The board stressed that Lossada's article did not represent the corps' views on the status of the machine gun.[55] On the other hand, if the artillery could not control a new source of fire power which could threaten the corps' traditional role, this was an incentive to keep the new weapon out of the battlefield. Thus the Artillery Professional Board concluded in 1902 that the machine gun would never replace the horse artillery to support cavalry on independent missions. And the board also stated that substituting a machine gun for a certain number of infantrymen armed with magazine rifles did not provide any significant improvement to the fire power of the infantry units, due to the mechanical limitations and cumbersome transport of the early models.[56] Nonetheless, this attitude was not shared by all the artillerymen.[57]

Captain Ruíz-Fornells, of the infantry corps, accepted that all the tactical arms had machine guns adapted to their own needs. On the other hand, since the machine gun was essentially a modified infantry rifle, it was only logical that the infantry were able to decide on its employment.[58] Major Calero - another infantryman - went further by rejecting any idea of the machine gun being

[54] José de Lossada, 'Moderna Artillería', MA, LV, 2 (July-December 1900), p. 292; Pedro Jevenois, 'Ametralladoras', MA, LVIII, 1 (January-June 1903), p. 177.
[55] This account of the incident is based on Vigón, Artillería española, III. 240, and 'Crónica interior', MA, LVIII, 2 (July-December 1903), pp. 65-6. Some details on this incident given in Vigón did not coincide with those provided by the journal, but no other sign has been found to think that Vigón was writing about a different case. Both sources display the artillery's corporate attitude anyway.
[56] Artillería, Junta Facultativa, Informe sobre 'Necesidad de experimentar ametralladoras y cañones automáticos de pequeños calibres', 27 February 1902, AGMS 2/1/7.
[57] Jevenois, 'Ametralladoras', pp. 30-1; Lossada, 'Moderna Artillería', p. 292.
[58] Enrique Ruíz-Fornells, 'Fuegos de la Infantería', EM, XXIII, 1 (January-June 1904), pp. 23-4.

considered an artillery piece. The infantry had to take charge of its study. Since it fired the infantry rifle cartridge and followed the infantry's manoeuvres, the machine gun could not be anything but an infantry weapon. Therefore, it must be used in the exclusive service of the infantry, and maybe the cavalry as well.[59]

Calero's last point had been anticipated - at least partially - by Lieutenant-colonel Banús a couple of years before. He concluded from the experience of the Boer War that machine guns did not replace artillery. Their real role was to increase the fire power of the cavalry and the mounted infantry.[60] Such an increase was badly needed on the modern battlefield. The cavalry remained the weapon of opportunity, but they could not create the opportunity by weakening the enemy infantry unless they were supported by horse artillery or their own cavalry machine guns.[61] However, Lieutenant de la Gándara thought the machine gun so closely integrated within the infantry that no other corps should use it: there must not be machine guns in the cavalry because they could limit the latter's action by forcing the cavalrymen to look for firing positions.[62] Nevertheless, de la Gándara softened his radical view some pages later and reckoned a ratio of one machine gun company per cavalry division enough. A larger scale would cause the underemployment of the weapons, since they would find few opportunities for their use and 'opportunity is a sine qua non for them...'[63]

Perhaps surprisingly, the cavalry showed interest in the new

[59] Calero, 'Ideas sobre organización', p. 451.
[60] Banús, Reflexiones, pp. 70-1.
[61] Eduardo Gallego y Ramos, 'Misión de la Caballería en las guerras antiguas y modernas', EM, XX, 1 (January-June 1901), p. 164; see also Jevenois, 'Ametralladoras', pp. 30-1.
[62] Gándara, Ametralladoras de campaña, pp. 20-5.
[63] '[L]a oportunidad es en ellas condición sine qua non...', Ibid., p. 89.

weapon as well. Despite the fact that the increasing fire power of modern weapons was eroding the cavalry's traditional tactical role, at least a section of the cavalrymen seemed eager to adopt the machine gun. The reason was that they saw it as the remedy which would allow them to recover their old status on the battlefield. Since a few machine guns could replace the fire power of many carbines, there would be less need for dismounted fighting. The traditional spirit and tactics of cavalry would be preserved and the arme blanche would remain the horseman's main weapon.[64]

A alternative solution to the problem of which tactical arm the machine gun had to be assigned to was the creation of a brand new machine gun corps. An artillery officer, Major Lossada, had already weighed up an independent machine gun corps in 1903. He ruled it out because the machine gun lacked enough shock action, fire power and mobility (the main attributes of infantry, artillery and cavalry, respectively) and had no other feature overcoming those of the traditional tactical arms.[65] But the idea of independence still found supporting voices in the Spanish military, such as Colonel Modesto Navarro, of the infantry corps. Though admitting their resemblance to the rifle, and therefore their closeness to infantry, Colonel Navarro thought that machine guns must become a fourth tactical arm; the combination of several tactical arms was much better than the mixture of different weapons in the same arm, so attaching a machine gun section to every infantry battalion or regiment would go against the prevailing foundations of warfare.[66]

[64] Eliseo Sanz Balza, La ametralladora en caballería (Madrid, 1906), pp. 6, 11-2.
[65] José de Lossada Canterac, Ametralladoras (Segovia, 1903), p. viii. Commissioned in the artillery corps in 1879, Lossada taught at the Artillery Academy (1896-1911); promoted to brigadier in 1919, he was head of the artillery section at the War Ministry (1920-1921).
[66] Modesto Navarro García, 'Prólogo' in Gándara, Estudios [1908 edition], pp. xiii-xviii.

c) Who should command the machine gun units?

Despite their differences on organization, both Lossada and Navarro agreed in opposing the integration of machine guns into the basic tactical units (regiment and battalion), a view also shared by Jevenois, who thought that machine guns should be grouped in battalions of three or four batteries under the divisional artillery commander.[67] Navarro reckoned the division the right level to integrate a machine gun unit, whose commanding officer must not have more initiative than the commander of divisional artillery.[68] Lossada thought that machine guns would always be a strange element within an infantry or cavalry unit, even if commanded by officers of these arms, so they had to be a temporary attachment only and return under the general officer commanding the major unit afterwards. At any rate, the machine guns had to be used in separate sections.[69] In fact, the Artillery Experiments Commission reached a similar conclusion by 1908, and it argued that attaching machine gun sections permanently would hinder the mobility of infantry and cavalry units.[70]

A Lieutenant Pelayo expressed disagreement with these views. A divisional or army corps commander was not in a position to realize the fleeting opportunities for a successful use of the machine gun. Therefore this weapon had to be integrated into the basic tactical units of infantry and cavalry, whose commanding officers had a closer knowledge of the events on the battlefield.[71] Nonetheless, this did not necessarily mean a better

[67] Jevenois, 'Ametralladoras', p. 177.
[68] Navarro, 'Prólogo' in Gándara, Estudios [1908 edition], pp. xix-xxii.
[69] Lossada, Ametralladoras, pp. viii, 84, 177.
[70] Ministerio de la Guerra, Artillería, Comisión de Experiencias, Informe sobre 'Las experiencias efectuadas con diversos modelos de ametralladoras' (segunda parte), 29 April 1908, AGMS 2/1/9. See also 'Ametralladoras Hotchkiss 1907', MA, LXIII, 1 (January-June 1908), pp. 33-4.
[71] A.G. Pelayo, 'Las ametralladoras en campaña', RTIC, XV, 1 (January-June 1905), pp. 431-2, 472-4.

understanding of the machine gun and its tactics, and the way weapons were organized within tactical outfits was not unimportant. A subaltern commanding a battalion machine gun section had less chance to influence tactical issues than the commander of a regimental company of machine guns.[72]

3. The machine gun and tactics (1900-1913).

a) The problem of controlling infantry fire power.

The discussions about the machine gun took place within a more general debate on the effectiveness of infantry fire. Captain Jevenois had small confidence in the infantry's individual musketry: the conscripts' short terms in the ranks, the isolation in dispersed skirmishing lines, and fear, led the riflemen to shoot quickly and inaccurately, wasting their ammunition.[73] A proposed solution was collective rifle fire (that is, fire in which the officers announced to their men the targets, sight adjustment and number of rounds to be shot). However, there was disagreement about the effectiveness, especially at medium and long range, of this kind of fire in fighting conditions.

Jevenois stated in 1907 that the Russo-Japanese War had shown the increased importance of collective fire over individual fire.[74] On the contrary, Captain Rodríguez Tarduchy - an infantryman - was sceptical about the effectiveness of the collective fire proposed by the regulations. He thought that it was based on firing range experiences, far from the real conditions of the battlefield. He also remarked on the great difficulties which officers would find in directing their units' fire: they would be too busy in leading and keeping their men

[72] Shelford Bidwell and Dominick Graham, Fire Power. British Army Weapons and Theories of War, 1904-1945 (London, 1985), pp. 22-3, 55.
[73] Jevenois, 'Ametralladoras', pp. 23-4.
[74] Jevenois, 'Consecuencias tácticas', p. 423.

steady, their units would be too dispersed and the transmission of orders would be too difficult to allow accurate fire direction. Most times fire direction and tactical command of the troops would be the same thing. Collective fire was really individual fire at the same time and the riflemen must be trained accordingly.[75]

It seems plausible that he had taken into account the experience of the early years of the Moroccan campaigns. General Rodríguez del Barrio recalled that he never saw the use of collective fire during the years (1909-1917) he served in Morocco. Many officers seemed to be ignorant about that kind of fire, although it was included in the firing regulations.[76] But rather than ignorance, perhaps the reason for these officers' conduct was that they thought that collective fire made little sense on the African battlefields. According to Colonel Bermúdez de Castro, the contemporary doctrines of collective fire were useless against the natives. These fought scattered on a wide front without forming a regular skirmishing line. Therefore, the riflemen had to rely on their individual accuracy, since the officers could no longer direct their units' collective fire against clear targets.[77]

However, it seemed difficult to improve the individual musketry training of conscripts when there was a trend to reduce the terms of military service. A solution, proposed by Captain Ruíz-Fornells in 1904, was to increase the numbers of machine guns - which would allow the army to exploit to the full the qualities of accuracy and range of the modern small rifled weapons.[78] A contributor to

[75] Emilio R[odríguez]. Tarduchy, El tiro de la Infantería. Ensayo crítico independiente (Burgos, 1913), pp. 22-3.
[76] Angel Rodríguez del Barrio, 'El Regimiento de Infantería. El Pelotón de combate. El Batallón de ametralladoras', LGP, XI, 7 (July 1926), pp. 4-5.
[77] Luis Bermúdez de Castro, 'Táctica para el combate en Marruecos', MI, III, 25 (January 1914), p. 29-30.
[78] Ruíz-Fornells, 'Fuegos', p. 24. The German army had drawn at that time the conclusion that it was easier to teach conscripts to produce huge volumes of fire with a machine gun than to turn them into marksmen: Bidwell and Graham, p. 22.

a professional journal pointed out the greater effectiveness of the machine gun over the riflemen to sweep the range from 600 to 1,500/2,000 metres.[79] Some essayists expressed the view that machine gun fire was less adequate than rifle musketry to sweep extended targets. They did not take into account the fact that a machine gun was less vulnerable and easier to control than a line of riflemen, and that the former's capability to hit targets successively through accurate concentrations of bullets made up amply for the 'narrowness' of its field of fire.[80]

b) <u>The machine gun as a weapon of opportunity</u>.

Although Ruíz-Fornells had envisaged an intensive use of the machine gun as a way to deliver controlled infantry fire power, mainstream thinking did not favour such use by the infantry (nor indeed by any arm). The machine gun was seen as a weapon of opportunity whose use on the battlefield was limited to infrequent favourable moments of the fighting. Even an essayist asserting the machine gun's role in all the stages of battle recommended only careful, occasional use.[81]

There were objective reasons for such a view. In the early years of the twentieth century, the machine gun certainly was not a handy weapon to use in the attack. A machine gun in movement - with its crew, its transport horse or mule and assorted baggage - offered a clearer target than a small group of riflemen taking advantage of the folds of the terrain.[82] The machine gun also generated distrust about its performance because it was exposed

[79] Juan Laverón Agut, 'Conferencia sobre ametralladoras', <u>EM</u>, XXVII, 1 (January-June 1908), pp. 101-2.
[80] Eladio Rodríguez, Pascual Torras and José Muñoz, <u>Conferencias sobre ametralladoras</u> (n.p., 1908), p. 32; Bidwell and Graham, pp. 28-9.
[81] Laverón, 'Conferencia', pp. 100, 105-6.
[82] However, Lossada and Jevenois thought that the size of contemporary machine guns allowed them to go unnoticed and reach easily the most advanced points of the firing line: Lossada, 'Moderna Artillería', p. 292; Jevenois, 'Ametralladoras', pp. 29-30.

to over-heating and mechanical breakdowns, and consumed huge amounts of ammunition which was difficult to carry to the firing line.[83] Therefore, it was a logical step to conclude that its effectiveness was only guaranteed for short periods of time (this also meant that its effects were understood as temporary). Thus the machine gun was 'the weapon of the moment' (i.e. a weapon of opportunity). According to this concept, the machine gun could not be used continuously in all the stages of the combat; otherwise the machine gun's tactical role would lose its essence and be exposed to failure.[84]

It is noteworthy that the expenditure of ammunition was of such concern that it led de la Gándara to disapprove of any tactical use of the machine gun (i.e. just like any other accepted weapon on the battlefield), unless it could produce a significant enough outcome.[85] The historian T.H.E. Travers has shown a similar concern in the British army to save ammunition when the essence of the machine gun is precisely to produce high volumes of fire power (which logically consumes a lot of ammunition).[86] This suggests that contemporary armies were unwilling to exploit the full capabilities of the machine gun by devoting more effort to solving the problem of the supply of ammunition. In other words, the machine gun - in order to be an effective weapon - needed large amounts of ammunition (which admittedly was not always easy to supply), but instead of seeking ways to overcome such difficulties, the military rather preferred to solve the problem by restraining the tactical role of this new weapon on the battlefield.

[83] Niemand, 'Crónica general', RCM, XXV (1900), p. 98; Rodríguez, Torras, and Muñoz, p. 33.
[84] Lossada, Ametralladoras, p. 176; Rodríguez, Torras, and Muñoz, pp. 32-3.
[85] Gándara, Estudios [1908 edition], p. 255.
[86] T.H.E. Travers, 'The Offensive and the Problem of Innovation in British Military Thought, 1870-1915', Journal of Contemporary History, 13, 4 (October 1978), p. 536.

c) The operational role of the machine gun.

Besides the issues mentioned above, the increasing emphasis of the Spanish army on offensive doctrines was a significant factor in underrating the military value of the machine gun. Fire power technology had shifted the balance to the side of defence, but, as the first part of this chapter has shown, the Spanish military's mind set was dominated by a psychological image of warfare. Despite the increased power of firearms (or precisely because of this), the human factors - morale, discipline, and so on - were still exalted as the decisive ones. And within this frame of thought, offensive tactics were the surest way to achieve victory, since they required the highest display of these factors. Machine guns, the latest piece of fire power technology, could not help running into trouble in this atmosphere. The army's initial reaction was the adaptation of the weapon and its qualities to the predominant frame of tactical thinking rather than the other way round.[87]

Captain Herrera de la Rosa, who was an observer attached to the Japanese army during the Russo-Japanese War, reported that the use of the machine gun demanded a certain degree of passivity in the conduct of operations. This plus the mechanical requirements and the high ammunition consumption forced the armies to keep the machine gun for the right moment only.[88] So de la Gándara concluded that the machine gun's role 'is reduced to reinforcing [cannon and rifle] fire [and therefore lacks] enough distinctiveness to introduce variations in current general tactics.'[89]

[87] Tim Travers' comments about the British army are applicable to the Spanish case for the most part: Travers, Killing Ground, pp. 68-71.
[88] Capitán Herrera de la Rosa, Impresiones recogidas de la campaña ruso-japonesa con el ejército del general barón Nogui, p. 88, 30 November 1905, AGMS 2/8/152.
[89] '[S]e reduce a reforzar los fuegos...personalidad suficiente para introducir variaciones en la

Lossada acknowledged that machine guns could be effective in the advanced guard (where there were more chances for sudden clashes). But they must be removed from the firing line once the main force of the army went into action, either for offence or defence (Lossada was more interested in the former).[90] The machine gun was seen as a fire power reserve, which had to be used by surprise in order to achieve the greatest effect in a short time (that is, as a weapon of opportunity). In practice, this meant relegating the machine gun to secondary operations on the fringes of the battle (to deliver fire power when there were not enough troops) and in special kinds of combat (such as mountain and irregular warfare).[91]

Besides keeping the machine gun out of the major clashes on the battlefield, the military underrated its defensive capabilities. Contemporary tactical thinking seemed indeed to be reluctant to envisage the deployment of many machine guns for defence in the firing line. De la Gándara only justified such a deployment if the defensive front was very long, but he also warned about the huge consumption of ammunition it involved.[92]

d) <u>The effects of the machine gun on morale</u>.

With hindsight, restraints on the use of the machine gun appear surprising at a time when the military essayists were worried by the double-edged effects of contemporary fire power. The increase in individual effectiveness of small firearms after the mid-nineteenth century had been counterbalanced by the dispersal of their operators. This had reduced the officers' control over their

actual táctica general.' Gándara, Estudios [1908 edition], p. 255.
[90] Lossada, Ametralladoras, pp. 86-95.
[91] Victor Martín García and Francisco Gómez Souza, Estudios de arte militar, 3 vol. (Madrid, 1910), II. 299-301; Navarro, 'Prólogo' in Gándara, Estudios [1908 edition], p. xviii.
[92] Gándara, Estudios [1908 edition], pp. 254-5.

men and, in a sense, the collective effectiveness of units (it was more difficult to maintain fire discipline). But the machine gun put back in the commanders' hands the means to produce fire power in a highly disciplined way. Since it was a machine, such a weapon removed the frailties of the human being from the act of shooting.[93]

Captain Ruíz-Fornells acknowledged this fact. He was a rare supporter of the use of the machine gun during all the stages of combat. Ruíz-Fornells stated that it was impossible to exploit fully the effectiveness of rifle fire - even if the riflemen were all marksmen - since the soldiers were too shaken by the ordeal of battle to make the best use of their weapons. On the contrary, the machine gun was essentially a multiple automatic rifle and a nerveless weapon, which substituted a stable mounting for the staggering man as its firing platform. And it needed very few men to produce more effective fire power than a large number of troops armed with rifles.[94]

But these two features of the weapon (its mechanical nature and the reduction of troop numbers it involved) were fated to cause rejection on the part of contemporary military minds, which were attached to an image of warfare based on psychological, human factors. Technological innovation was accepted insofar as it bolstered those elements; those sides of innovation implying an essential change in the established image of warfare were overlooked or underrated. It was admitted, as early as 1900, that the machine gun was 'concentrated infantry' whose fire was more accurate than the 'real' infantry's. However, it lacked the infantrymen's morale. So the machine gun could be superior to any

[93] Keegan, Face of Battle, pp. 228-30.
[94] Ruíz-Fornells, 'Fuegos', p. 20; a similar argument is found in Jevenois, 'Ametralladoras', p. 34.

infantry of low morale and poor training in musketry, but it could never be a match for infantrymen who were highly trained and motivated individuals.[95]

On the other hand, the machine gun represented a kind of fire power which was seen as threatening for the foundations of the contemporary offensive tactics. T.H.E. Travers has pointed out the strong concern of the British military establishment with the 'weight' of the attack and, therefore, with numbers and manpower. The 'energy' or drive of an attack was supposed to derive from the latter's 'weight' (i.e. the strength of the attacking troops).[96] Thus it was logical to see a weapon which implied a reduction of manpower on the firing line as a weakening of the offensive.

The professional literature shows quite similar worries in the Spanish army. Captain Dolla pointed out the importance of the advance in mass, even in exaggerated numbers. The troops, by pushing each other physically within close-knit masses, would get the advantages of comradeship and discipline.[97] Major Ricardo Burguete saw in sheer numbers the way to get closer to the enemy on the fire-swept battlefield. 'Against the huge volume of bullets with which the enemy will sweep our infantry's front...it is necessary to throw men, and sometimes "human masses"...'[98] Writing after the Russo-Japanese War, Lieutenant-colonel Banús concluded that decisive success was only achieved, in moral and material terms, through mass.[99] Martínez de Campos' memoirs offer an example of this tendency to see fighting value in sheer numbers during the Melilla campaign. He described how, during the night

[95] Niemand, 'Cronica general', p. 98.
[96] Travers, 'The Offensive and the Problem of Innovation', pp. 541-3.
[97] Dolla, 'Conferencias del Círculo Militar', p. 38.
[98] 'Contra la enorme masa de proyectiles con que el enemigo cubrirá...el frente de nuestra infantería, hay que lanzar hombres, y a veces "masas humanas"...' Burguete, Nuevos métodos, p. 26.
[99] Banús, Arte de la guerra, p. 46.

hours, lots of rifles were placed on the stone wall of a Spanish position, ready to fire without warning: 'Nobody thought of replacing them with a few machine guns enfilading the barbed wire. Numbers - doubtless - gave an impression of greater strength; they gave it to ourselves, at least.'[100]

As regards the machine gun, this thinking meant a failure to understand that the effectiveness of its fire was what gave real fighting value to an infantry unit, and that technology had changed the quantitative relationship between strength and volume of fire power. The authors of a work published in 1908 offer an example of such a lack of understanding: '[S]ome authors define the machine gun as condensed infantry; but this can only refer to the intensity of its fire, that is, to the material part, since concentration disappears in terms of personnel and actually very few infantry turn out.'[101] These words suggested that, for example, an infantry battalion with a reduced strength and equipped with several machine guns was deemed 'less infantry' than a traditional battalion armed only with rifles. But modern firearms allowed a greater fire power to be produced with the same strength, or permitted a modern unit to deliver the same volume of fire power despite having reduced in strength, a fact already recognized by Captain Ruíz-Fornells in 1904.[102] Nonetheless, in 1908, the Artillery Experiments Commission did not hesitate to call the idea of condensed infantry a falsehood.[103]

The issue of numbers had a direct influence on tactics. For it

[100] 'Nadie piensa en reemplazarlos por unas cuantas máquinas que enfilen la alambrada. El número -sin duda- da impresión de mayor fuerza; nos lo da a nosotros mismos, por lo menos.' Martínez de Campos y Serrano, Ayer, I. 60-1.
[101] '[A]lgunos autores definen la ametralladora como infantería condensada; pero esto sólo puede referirse a la intensidad de su fuego, es decir, a la parte material, pues en la personal desaparece la concentración, y resulta muy poca infantería.' Rodríguez, Torras, and Muñoz, p. 32.
[102] Ruíz-Fornells, 'Fuegos', p. 20.
[103] Ministerio de la Guerra, Artillería, Comisión de Experiencias, Informe sobre 'Las experiencias efectuadas con diversos modelos de ametralladoras' (segunda parte), 29 April 1908, AGMS 2/1/9.

linked the thickening of the skirmishing line to the necessary superiority of fire before the assault. That is, in order to win, the attacking side had to achieve moral superiority, which derived in turn from the superiority of fire. The problem was that there was not a clear way to know when this superiority had been achieved.[104] As a contemporary essayist put it:

> Achieving fire superiority is an issue which almost has to do more with the troops' morale than with the material effects caused by fire. The thing which decides when fire superiority has been achieved is the fact of advancing under fire. If the attacking side makes progress despite the defender's fire, this means that, in practice, the former has achieved that superiority.[105]

The solution which best fitted the psychological image of warfare was to think (as Lieutenant-colonel Banús did) that accumulating the largest number of riflemen for the firefight translated into a superiority of fire - and, therefore, of morale. The fact that the machine gun was very effective against thick lines or groups of riflemen at short range - as de la Gándara admitted - was overlooked, as was the idea of using machine fire power to replace riflemen.[106] Incidentally, Banús reckoned the density of lines necessary for the defence as well, whereas de la Gándara thought that machine guns could save manpower, at least in passive defensive sectors.[107]

4. The machine gun in the Spanish army: procurement and performance in the campaign of Melilla (1907-1909).

a) Procurement.

The push for the acquisition at last of the first batch of

[104] Travers, Killing Ground, pp. 70-1.
[105] 'Obtener la superioridad de fuego es cuestión que afecta casi más a la moral de las tropas que a los efectos materiales que el tiro produce. Lo que determina cuándo se ha alcanzado dicha superioridad es el hecho del avance bajo el fuego. Si el atacante progresa pese al fuego del defensor, significa que, a efectos prácticos, ha alcanzado dicha superioridad.' Francisco Sigüenza, 'La artillería en relación con la infantería', MA, LXV, 2 (July-December 1910), p. 263.
[106] Banús, Arte de la guerra, pp. 45-6; Gándara, Estudios [1908 edition], p. 263.
[107] Banús, Arte de la guerra, p. 46; Gándara, Estudios [1908 edition], p. 262.

machine guns for operational purposes after the Cuban campaigns was due to the commercial initiative of the representative in Spain of the French arms manufacturer Hotchkiss, Esteban Marín, who wrote on 14 August 1907 to War Minister General Fernando Primo de Rivera (uncle of the future dictator of the 1920s). Marín explained that the events in Morocco led him to suppose that the Spanish army would urgently need to acquire machine guns for use in a likely intervention in northern Africa. He offered the opportunity to get twenty Hotchkiss machine guns in the Spanish rifle calibre, which would be delivered within four weeks after being ordered. This could be achieved if the Spanish government made its order within ten days. Marín stated that the proposed figure was his own guess, but the manufacturer could accept a larger order, if regarded. He also remembered that the Spanish army had already tested a Hotchkiss machine gun in 1902 and concluded that it had performed better than the Maxim model.[108]

The urgency of the Spanish government was seemingly real, since a document of the War Ministry (of unidentified origin, but which surely stemmed from the Artillery Section), dated 21 August 1907, records that the war minister gave an order this same day to start the procedures for the direct purchase of twenty Hotchkiss machine guns. Nevertheless, the document's content was a warning against a rash purchase, and advised waiting until comparative trials with other models were carried out. If this was not possible, it recommended that a number of officers be sent to test the machine gun in the manufacturer's factory.[109] Urgency prevailed and, on 22 August 1907, the Artillery Section informed the captain-general of the First Military Region that two officers of the Artillery

[108] Marín to Ministro de la Guerra, 14 August 1907, AGMS 2/1/73.
[109] Ministerio de la Guerra [Sección de Artillería?], memorandum on the acquisition of twenty Hotchkiss machine guns, 21 August 1907, AGMS 2/1/73.

Experiments Commission were to be sent to France in order to examine the machine guns on offer and arrange the purchase.[110]

The commission's officers, Colonel de Santiago and Major Esparza, travelled to France to check the mechanical performance of the Hotchkiss machine guns, but they also met army officers to collect information on the French military's ideas about the role of machine guns. The Spanish commissioners' conclusions on the subject (the machine gun was essentially a defensive weapon; it was not condensed infantry; it must be under control of major unit commanders) inspired the Artillery Experiments Commission report of April 1908, and probably much of the Spanish thought after 1908 as well.[111]

The contract of purchase for the first Hotchkiss machine guns was signed on 31 October 1907.[112] During the next few years, more Hotchkiss weapons were bought by the Spanish army. But the overall numbers of machine guns were not excessive. In September 1908 there were twelve sections (two machine guns each) for six brigades (including those equipped with the old Maxims). Thus the ratio was one section to three infantry battalions. By early 1910, after the Melilla campaign, there were twenty two sections.[113] Besides the issues about machine guns and tactical doctrine discussed above, the financial factor must also be taken into account. Even if the Spanish army had developed a more favourable attitude towards the machine gun, the continual restraints on ordnance procurement would probably have slowed down any ambitious

[110] Ministerio de la Guerra, Sección de Artillería to Capitán General de la 1ª Región, 22 August 1907, AGMS 2/1/73.
[111] Artillería, Comisión de Experiencias, Memoria redactada por el Coronel D. Luis de Santiago y Comte. D. Luis Esparza como resultado de la Comisión que les fue conferida por R.O. de 22 de Agosto p°.p°. y que trata de la ametralladora Hotchkiss en particular y de las apreciaciones de los mismos acerca del empleo esta clase de armas en general, 20 September 1907, AGMS 2/1/73.
[112] Documents concerning the purchase are filed in AGMS 2/1/73.
[113] Gándara, Estudios [1910 edition], pp. 290-3.

policy about the machine gun. In 1909, the Spanish army had a ratio of 3.9 artillery pieces to every one thousand men; even the armies of countries like Greece (6.9), Portugal (5) or Bulgaria (4.6) had higher ratios.[114] If this happened with a traditional weapon, the slow introduction of a new weapon whose value was still uncertain is not surprising.

b) The lessons of the campaign of Melilla (1909).

The brand new machine gun units of the Spanish army underwent their baptism of fire in 1909, during the campaign of Melilla. Contemporary judgements about their performance in that conflict were positive as a whole. The only exception this writer has found are Lieutenant-colonel Avilés' remarks. Avilés stated that the machine gun was not useful against an enemy like the Moroccan irregular fighting man. After an initial period of frequent use, restraint prevailed, according to Avilés, who concluded that the machine gun had to be kept for the defence of special places.[115]

On the contrary, Lieutenant-colonel Lossada praised the accuracy and rate of fire of the machine gun. These qualities were very helpful against the scattered Moorish fighting array, since the artillery had little effectiveness without clear-cut targets and the musketry of the infantry was poor due to the conscripts's limited training.[116]

Lossada indicated that the machine guns had often fired without interruption during the combats. This went against the Central Firing School's doctrine, which based machine gun tactics on surprise.[117] Actually the first regulations for machine gun units,

[114] Vigón, Artillería española, II. 299 n 215.
[115] Avilés, 'Enseñanzas', pp. 289-90.
[116] Conde de Casa-Canterac [José de Lossada Canterac], 'Ametralladoras', EM, XXIX, 2 (July-December 1910), p. 402.
[117] Ibid., pp. 402-6, 414.

put into effect in July 1909, stipulated occasional use and surprise. But in practice things were rather different. Captain Medialdea - an instructor of the Central Firing School sent to observe and report on the machine guns' performance - pointed out that the weapons used to go into action in the early stages of offensive combats and stayed in their fire positions until the end, sometimes firing without any interruption.[118]

The official doctrine about use as a weapon of opportunity was not followed in the defence either. Medialdea stated that the machine guns' performance was excellent despite their constant use.[119] And according to Lossada, riflemen usually did not open fire when there were machine guns available.[120]

The field commanders sometimes had ordered the machine guns to intervene even if the latter lacked suitable targets, because their moral effect made up for their small material effectiveness in such cases. The Spanish soldiers got used to the rhythmic shooting of the machine gun and highly valued its covering fire. Medialdea witnessed once how the riflemen, advancing under heavy enemy fire, looked back from time to time and wondered why the machine guns did not open fire. Such behaviour had a logical foundation. Whenever the machine guns swept the positions whose fire was more dangerous, the enemy's shooting diminished in a perceptible way. Then the Spanish skirmishing line could advance with a greater resolution, though the soldiers still did not see their adversaries.[121]

[118] Federico Medialdea Muñoz, Las ametralladoras en la campaña del Rif (1909) (Madrid, 1910), pp. 54, 56; for an operational account of the machine gun units in the campaign, see ibid., pp. 91-108. Medialdea (1880-1926) was an instructor at the Central Firing School (1908-1914) and the Infantry Academy (1915-1920); he served in the Moroccan campaigns (1924-1926), where he died from heart disease.
[119] Ibid., p. 61.
[120] Casa-Canterac, 'Ametralladoras' p. 402.
[121] Medialdea, pp. 56-7. This behaviour resembles British Major McMahon's 'tabloid' fire power tactics, based on the distinctiveness to the ear of machine gun fire: Bidwell and Graham, p. 52.

In its post-mortem about the campaign, the General Staff discarded any use of the machine gun units as an independent arm, different from the other fighting arms. Their employment according to the tactical rules of the artillery was rejected as well. But other conclusions were rather contradictory. The General Staff still supported the idea of using surprise as the base for machine gun tactics. But, at the same time, it concluded that the machine gun had to be used frequently, since it had turned out to be a powerful support of musketry.[122] Frequency and surprise are requirements difficult to match on the battlefield, and this contradiction probably reveals hesitant thinking about the tactical role of the machine gun. However, the experience of Melilla did not seem to alter in a significant way the prevailing views about the machine gun. Proof of this is the almost total neglect of it in the 1913 infantry regulations: there were only five articles, and these were dedicated to fighting <u>against</u> machine guns.[123]

In his survey of the machine guns in the Melilla campaign, Captain Medialdea made a point which is useful to understand contemporary attitudes towards the machine gun. He advised against the general use of sweeping fire on the enemy positions due to the huge expenditure of ammunition it involved, even though it was of benefit to morale.[124] This looks like a odd conclusion when the military were so eager to sustain the offensive spirit of the troops. For it was contradictory to dispense with the machine gun when this actually bolstered the morale of the attacking troops. But it was not contradictory within the terms of the psychological image of warfare ('the psychological battlefield'), which weighed

[122] Estado Mayor Central, <u>Enseñanzas</u>, pp. 113-4.
[123] RTI 1913, articles 457 to 461.
[124] Medialdea, p. 57.

too heavily the human-centred factors to the detriment of fire power (a more mechanical factor).

The machine gun was a kind of fire power which, in being produced by machines, stressed the quantitative side of warfare, based on non-human and tangible factors (e.g. technology), susceptible of being measured and treated as physical, mechanical processes unaltered by human emotions. While the crewmen executed the mechanical movements needed to fire and supply the weapon with ammunition, their emotions would not change the accuracy and the number of rounds fired per minute by the machine gun on a fixed beaten zone. Thus it is possible to develop mathematical models and statistical tables about events on the battlefield (how many men crossing the zone will be hit, how many machine guns are needed to seal off a certain stretch of the front line). For the military establishment of the early twentieth century, accepting the increasing importance of mechanized fire power meant accepting a relative decline of the qualitative, traditional military virtues (discipline, self-sacrifice and so on) which had been valued until then as the decisive factors in war and in which professional officers had grown up.[125] For many officers, if not all of them, this was a difficult change of mind, a change which could only be stimulated by the actual experience of combat.

[125] Travers, Killing Ground, p. 77. It is noteworthy, in contrast, that many Spanish military essayists of the sixteenth century (especially its second half) saw no conflict between soldierly virtues and the use of new technology (firearms); on the contrary, such a transformation of warfare demanded the best qualities from contemporary soldiers: José Antonio Maravall, Antiguos y modernos. Visión de la historia e idea de progreso hasta el Renacimiento, 2nd edition (Madrid, 1986), pp. 542-50.

5.-THE OFFICER CORPS AND THE MILITARY REFORMS, 1916-1936.

This chapter surveys the most relevant events in relation to the army and its reform during the political-military crisis of 1917-1923 (unleashed by the officer corps' will to safeguard its vested interests), during General Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (whose final failure dragged the monarchy down), and during the Second Republic (which failed to implement a solid liberal democracy and heal the fractures the Spanish society had developed). The reforms of military education in 1927 and 1932 are analysed in detail and assessed as illustrative of the tangle of politics and professional issues which affected Spain's military policy during this period.

1. The rise of peninsular corporatism: the *juntas de defensa*.

a) Morocco and the growth of professional dissatisfaction.

The Spanish army had developed, in addition to the corporatism of its branches, another source of internal division by the mid-1910s: the disagreement within the officer corps about promotion. As was shown in Chapter 1, promotion in the infantry and cavalry was linked to seniority in peacetime only. Therefore, the military operations in Morocco from the campaign of Melilla on opened the doors to promotions by war merit. The creation of the Spanish army's Moroccan regular troops (regulares) in 1911 - which were to carry the burden of fighting after that year - improved the prospects of those officers who hoped to speed up their careers through courage and skill on the African battlefields. These officers were known under the name of 'africanists', and their ambition became conspicuous. Social issues probably were not foreign to their eager pursuit of promotion, as in the French

colonial army, where, according to Douglas Porch, 'officers wore their ambition on their sleeves.' Unlike their British colleagues in colonial garrisons, the French and Spanish officers' careerist bent was not restrained by a code of gentlemanly social behaviour, which prevented the individual pursuit of professional promotion from getting out of hand.[1]

Even though the military supported the Spanish involvement in Morocco, few officers volunteered to fight there. Instead of looking for action, as Stanley G. Payne puts it, 'the great majority of officers dragged out their boring and unremarkable careers amid the sloth of peninsular garrisons, carping about low pay, slow promotion and favouritism.'[2] Nonetheless, the army in Morocco offered a number of administrative or bureaucratic posts which provided substantial additional incomes to the holders. Due to the nature of the appointment system, such posts were the preserve of officers with good contacts in the military hierarchy. The privileges and financial benefits of the protégés of the ministerial authorities (and even the crown), and the prestige and fast promotions of the africanists, brought about the jealousy of the officers of the peninsular garrisons.

The officers at home complained especially of the promotion by war merit, which they reckoned an encouragement of patronage and favouritism (they even accused the africanists of provoking armed clashes to get promotions). The Spanish army was prodigal in war rewards, which many times were not really justified (Vigón records a figure of 236,718 war merit promotions and decorations conceded

[1] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, p. 40; Payne, Politics, pp. 114-5; Douglas Porch, March to the Marne, p. 161. Neither the French nor the Spanish armies had modelled their officers' career pattern on a regimental system; it is noteworthy that the unfavourable effect on the officer corps' morale of the colonial soldiers' careerism bears some resemblance to that of the purchase of commissions in the British army before the Cardwell reforms: John Keegan, 'Regimental ideology', in Geoffrey Best and Andrew Wheatcroft (eds.), War, Economy, and the Military Mind (London, 1976), pp. 9-10.
[2] Payne, Politics, p. 126.

from 1909 to 1917). The attachment to strict seniority was also unfair insofar it made no distinction between mediocre officers and those of outstanding ability, but this lack of selection procedures was advantageous for the large numbers of officers whose professionalism was poor.[3]

Nonetheless, the critics of war merit promotion had a point. The Spanish army had developed by the early years of the twentieth century a penchant for valuing merit promotion in wartime more as a reward for campaign risks and hardships than as a recognition of proven command ability and a means to pick an elite of senior commanders. Thus an officer could be promoted in the Moroccan campaigns of 1909 and 1911 because he had been slightly wounded in an arm or a leg. The General Staff's analysis of the 1909 campaign admitted that combats were assessed according to the blood toll for one's own side rather than by the casualties inflicted on, or the military advantages obtained over, the enemy. Rules for a better control of war merit promotions were introduced after 1912 and seem to have been partially successful, but the previous experiences had also made the peninsular officers so sensitive that even a smaller number of cases of favouritism could still produce a lot of resentment.[4]

The average Spanish officer had also developed a strong sense of bureaucratic property status, which actually had a legal base. The 1878 army act had defined an officer's commissioned rank as his personal property and he was supposed to be entitled to legal protection whenever he reckoned his professional rights under threat.[5] To be fair, this point in the 1878 act was certainly a

[3] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, pp. 40-2; Vigón, 'Breves notas', p. 6.
[4] Estado Mayor Central, Enseñanzas del Rif, p. 84; Puell, 'Fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 111; Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mi vida, p. 31.
[5] CLE 1878, No. 367 (article 30); Payne, Politics, p. 124.

step forward in the process of professionalization of the Spanish officer corps.[6]

Besides the problems caused by the Moroccan conflict, the First World War worsened the officers' financial situation after 1914 because it unleashed inflation in Spain. Within four years, prices rose twofold, so the 1914 salaries lost half of their buying power in this period.[7] By 1916, the financial problems had increased the discontent of many officers of middle and junior rank towards the ruling political elite, while the policy of war merit promotions had estranged them from the higher military hierarchy.[8]

b) The *juntas de defensa* and De la Cierva's reform, 1916-1923.

The political-military crisis unleashed by the juntas de defensa (defence committees) originated in the need for military reforms highlighted by the conflict in Europe.[9] The major problem for any reformist intention was that a serious reform of the Spanish military required cuts in the size of the officer corps, and no officer was ready to sacrifice his career in order to improve the effectiveness of the army. War Minister General Luque did prepare a moderate reformist plan which was a cautious step forward. However, it failed to pass the parliamentary procedures in 1916.

Luque also introduced in 1916 physical tests as a means of selection for promotion. These tests were the first step leading to the political-military crisis of 1917. The way (trials in public) in which General Alfau, captain-general of the Fourth Military Region, applied the tests to several infantry field

[6] Olmeda, p. 98.
[7] Puell, 'Fuerzas armadas en la crisis', V. 90.
[8] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, p. 44.
[9] This account of the defence committee is based on Boyd, Praetorian Politics, pp. 44-229; Payne, Politics, pp. 122-51, 173-6, 182-3; Seco, pp. 257-300; and Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 96-105.

officers of the Barcelona garrison annoyed the corps' officers in the Catalonian capital. Then the infantry officers in Barcelona, inspired by the example of the specialist corps' committees, started organizing the Infantry Defence Committee (Junta de Defensa de Infantería) after mid-1916, in order to defend what they considered their legitimate professional interests. By early 1917, their example had spread to the rest of the army, although the Barcelona infantry committee (chaired by Colonel Benito Márquez) was to play a leading role. The defence committees' main purpose was the preservation of the interests of the peninsular officers, who would not hesitate to defy the authority of the military hierarchy and the cabinet.

In order not to upset further the dissatisfied officer corps, the military hierarchy actually did not interfere with this process (promoted by middle and junior rank officers) until May 1917. In this month, a new prime minister, García Prieto, and his war minister, General Aguilera, attempted to stem a movement which threatened the discipline of the army. Aguilera ordered the Barcelona infantry committee to disband itself. When the committee refused to do this, its members were arrested. At once, a new committee was organized by the Barcelona officers, and the other existing juntas demonstrated their support all over Spain. The government finally gave up in early June and released the arrested officers, because it did not want to take the risk of losing the army's loyalty during a time of social unrest (the example of the Russian Revolution in early 1917 was fresh).

On 1 June 1917, the Barcelona infantry committee had also submitted a document (which was called thereafter the 'Committees Manifesto') which contained, wrapped in vague demands for political reform, the basic claims of the insubordinate officers: an improvement of

the moral and professional conditions in the military career, better financial terms, and, above all, fairness in the promotion system (i.e. promotion by seniority alone). The manifesto got unexpected support from political groups which, though highly critical of the army so far, thought that the military now offered the opportunity to bring the rusty political order of the Restoration down. However, they failed to see that the officers' opposition to the government only sought to satisfy corporate interests. Thus an extra-official assembly of members of parliament convened to force a constitutional change in July 1917 was not backed by the military, which, moreover, helped the government to crack down on a revolutionary general strike next month.

García Prieto became prime minister again in late October 1917. His new cabinet included a civilian war minister, Juan de la Cierva, a conservative politician whose authoritarian bent had won the trust of the juntas. De la Cierva intended to calm down the defence committees and promised the satisfaction of their professional demands. In exchange, the committees had to abandon any sort of reformist political program of their own. The ready approval of the juntas proved that corporate interests were the military's main reason to defy the civil authority. This also frustrated the political ambitions of Colonel Márquez, who resigned in December 1917 as chairman of the Infantry Higher Committee; he was dismissed from the army in March 1918 (due to de la Cierva's plots) and soon disappeared from the limelight.

De la Cierva's policy took shape in the 1918 army reform act. With regard to the officer corps, the act satisfied the main demand of the defence committees: the suppression of promotions by war merit. Thereafter, in order to put an end to favouritism, all the

promotions would be conceded using strict seniority as a rule. In exceptional cases, promotion by war merit would be conceded after a thorough inquiry and parliamentary approval. This new system of promotion was demoralizing for the officers fighting in Morocco.[10]

The reform also provided more active appointments through an enlargement of the army force structure. The act set up a first line(regular) army, a second line army (formed by the youngest classes of reservists), and a territorial (older reservists) army. The regular peninsular army was increased to sixteen infantry divisions (two per military region) and three cavalry divisions, and the overall strength established at 180,000 troops. Nevertheless, the reform was only a patch which did not really improve the army's effectiveness. Actually the army strength had to be reduced in July 1918 due to financial shortages, and several thousand conscripts were discharged. The 1918 act was accompanied by a substantial increase in salaries. Depending on rank, officer pay was raised by 11 to 50 per cent (the average pay per hour of a Spanish skilled worker rose 86 per cent in the period 1914-1920).[11]

Nonetheless, the zeal of the military to preserve its vested interests did not disappear after de la Cierva's reform. The new organization of the army still left many officers unassigned. When de la Cierva's successor, General Marina, tried to implement a policy of amortization of vacancies in the officer lists (in order to adjust the numbers of promotions to the appointments provided by the 1918 organization), the committeesrefused to accept it. But, as time passed, the strength of the juntas wore out because they were unable to bridge the traditional internal divisions of the

[10] Lieutenant-colonel Núñez de Prado, a commander of regulares, articulated this dissatisfaction to the commission of inquiry on the disaster of Annual: Expediente Picasso, pp. 71-2.
[11] Data on salary rises taken from Fernández Bastarreche, 'El Ejército', XVI-1. 665.

officer corps. Moreover, the escalation of military operations in Morocco after 1918 increased the hostility between peninsular officers supporting the committees (junteros) and africanists, who, moreover, enjoyed an increasing popular appeal thanks to the successes in the Moroccan campaigns from 1919 to early 1921. On the other hand, Franco Salgado-Araujo stated in his memoirs that most infantry lieutenants stood for the 'open list' system. If this is true, it indicates that a part of the peninsular officers also stood against the defence committees and their excessively bureaucratic character.[12]

The position of the defence committees started crumbling after the defeat of the Spanish army in the eastern district of the Moroccan Protectorate (the so-called 'disaster of Annual') in the summer of 1921. The africanists blamed the juntas for the decreasing fighting spirit of the officer corps, which had allegedly been influential in the Spanish misfortunes in Morocco. Unable to answer this charge convincingly, the already weakened junteros fell into discredit and lost their power to face up to the government. Thus Prime Minister José Sánchez Guerra was finally able to dissolve the defence committees on 14 November 1922. Previously, the parliament passed a reform of the 1918 act which allowed a percentage of promotions by war merit if they satisfied several bureaucratic requirements.

This compromise and the disappearance of the juntas allowed a partial recovery of the officer corps' unity. But the army still fell short of completely overcoming its main inner division (merit or seniority promotion), which caused resentments that could not be healed in the short term. Nevertheless, this lack of unity had not been detrimental for the vested interests of the army as a

[12] Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mi vida, p. 31.

whole while the latter was the only support of (and therefore could influence) the dynastic politicians in the late 1910s and early 1920s. When the turmoil caused by the inquiry about the political responsibilities for the Moroccan disaster of 1921 brought about an opportunity to restore the supremacy of civil power (by starting a regeneration of the parliamentary regime), the officer corps could not help seeing this as a threat to its corporate interests. Therefore, the government found no support in the military to face up to the bloodless coup d'état (though it took the form of a nineteenth century pronunciamiento) of Lieutenant-general Miguel Primo de Rivera, captain-general of the Fourth Military Region (Barcelona), which imposed an alternative solution - an authoritarian regime - to replace the decaying Restoration political system in September 1923.[13]

2. Primo de Rivera and the Second Republic (1923-1936).

a) Primo de Rivera: the fight against corporatism (1923-1930).

General Primo de Rivera's government was a military authoritarian regime, and many officers were seconded to bureaucratic posts to oversee the civil service. But it remains a matter of debate among scholars how much Primo de Rivera's dictatorship was a fully militarist regime, if it ever was. The army initially agreed with a regime which seemed to bring political stability and social order back to the country and kept military corporate affairs out of the hands of the civil authority. However, Primo de Rivera was not a watchdog of traditional corporate interests, and his military policy led him to a clash with sections of the officer corps.[14]

[13] Boyd, Praetorian Politics, pp. 236-73.
[14] The following overview of Primo de Rivera's policy is based on Carlos Navajas Zubeldía, Ejército, estado y sociedad en España (1923-1930) (Logroño, 1991), pp. 117-56, 163-4, 168, 282-

An important outcome of Primo de Rivera's policy was the rise of the africanist elite within the army hierarchy, since this group of officers played a conspicuous role in the subsequent political and military history of Spain.[15] Although Primo de Rivera was inclined to stop any further advance in the Moroccan protectorate at the beginning of his dictatorship, he changed his mind after personal meetings with the africanists and embarked on a resolute war effort which finished the Moroccan conflict in 1927. This brought a shower of promotions which fell on the most outstanding officers of these campaigns.

Such promotions were possible because Primo de Rivera abolished the bureaucratic control procedures for promotions by war merit (1925). Later on, he reformed the promotion system to introduce the selective promotion of proficient officers both in wartime and peacetime (1926). At the same time, he changed the membership of the board in charge of promotions: the old members, retired lieutenant-generals, were replaced by Primo de Rivera's men. These measures were meant to speed up the careers of the ablest officers. Nevertheless, there was a risk of favouritism and unfairness (which increased under an authoritarian regime). The mistrust which the dictator's promotion policies revived in large sections of the army was a major cause of the military opposition to Primo de Rivera's regime.

Primo de Rivera also tried to cut the surplus of officers through the amortization of vacancies after a reorganization of the regular army. However, his efforts were far from successful. Worse, he linked cuts in personnel to political loyalty. Thus the infantry and the cavalry - the most loyal corps - did not lose

5; Boyd, Política pretoriana, pp. 324-60; Payne, Politics, pp. 208-55; Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 105-15; and Seco, pp. 303-364.

[15] Payne, Politics, p. 223. For more information on the africanists, see Mas Chao, pp. 56-62.

many command appointments for their officers in the new army organization, unlike the artillery and engineer corps.

The dictator's desire to keep the army and military policy under his control was also behind the decision to abolish the General Staff on 14 December 1925. The official reason was the difficulty in adapting this body to the Spanish military administrative framework. The oddly named Dirección General de Preparación de Campaña (General Directorate for Preparation of Field Operations), integrated within the War Ministry and whose head was a direct subordinate to the minister, took charge of the General Staff's functions.[16] The reform was essentially limited to cutting the General Staff's autonomy, which supports the contemporary view that Primo de Rivera's real aim was to get rid of his last chief of general staff, Captain-General Weyler, who had allegedly used the post to hinder the dictator's policy.[17]

The artillery corps was the most conspicuous opponent of Primo de Rivera, who wanted to reduce the artillery's prickly esprit de corps. Although the artillerymen were zealous supporters of promotion by seniority alone, Primo de Rivera ordered in 1926 that artillery officers could no longer exchange war merit promotions for the María Cristina Cross and had to accept those conceded after 1925. The result was a strong protest by all the artillery officers, but the dictator did not give up and ordered their dismissal from the service in September 1926. The artillerymen came back to the army in November after signing a humiliating document of obedience to the government. In early 1929, the artillery corps was the military backbone of a failed plot against Primo de Rivera and the dictator decided to expel the artillery

[16] CLE 1925, No. 427.
[17] Nazario Cebreiros, Las reformas militares. Estudio crítico (Santander, 1931), p. 134.

officers from the service once again. They were admitted back after signing a declaration in which they swore loyalty to Primo de Rivera's current government.

But the struggle against the artillerymen and the way Primo de Rivera had handled it harmed the position of the regime, which also had to face the opposition of other sections of the military which disagreed with the dictator's authoritarian manner. The resignation of Primo de Rivera in early 1930 (after the dictator found out that he had lost the confidence of his fellow generals and King Alfonso XIII) weakened the position of the monarchy, which in accepting the suppression of the constitutional regime in 1923 had linked its destiny to the dictatorship. A cabinet chaired by General Dámaso Berenguer (a former high commissioner in Morocco) tried unsuccessfully to restore the constitutional regime and save the monarchy. Alfonso XIII, acknowledging the lack of significant political support after the local elections in the spring of 1931, left the country to allow the formation of a republican government. After the political failure of Primo de Rivera, the military (though most officers had no republican feelings) adopted a passive attitude and did not stand either for or against the change of regime.[18]

b) <u>Azaña: remodelling the officer corps (1931-1933)</u>.

The Second Republic was proclaimed on 14 April 1931. The first republican war minister was Manuel Azaña, a left-of-centre politician. A student and admirer of the political-military policy of the French Third Republic, he sought to safeguard the supremacy of civil power over the military. Besides trying to put civil-military relations on a basis suitable for a contemporary

[18] Cardona, pp. 103-15.

democratic state (for instance, the 1906 Law of Jurisdictions was revoked), Azaña took on the professional problems and undertook a deep reorganization of the army.[19]

Azaña did not hesitate in tackling the root problem which had hindered military reform for five decades: the excessive numbers of officers. In order to cut the size of the officer corps, Azaña brought out a decree of voluntary retirement in 1931; within a set time, officers could leave the service prematurely without losing the full salaries corresponding to their rank. About 8,000 out of 20,500 officers (almost 40 per cent) took advantage of the decree, which meant a substantial cut in personnel at last. Three decades later, Generalissimo Franco said to his cousin and military secretary, Franco Salgado-Araujo, that Azaña's decree 'was not badly planned nor so faulty as was said at that time; it had the sectarian purpose of desiring to remove from the army's ranks the officers with monarchist ideas; but this was not achieved because...most of us stayed on.'[20]

The promotion system would be based on a combination of seniority and merit. Captains had to pass a compulsory course as a requirement for promotion to major. The course qualifications would change the order of seniority for promotion; thus the best officers in the course would be at the top of their academy class segment within the field grade ranks. Colonels would also be required to pass another course before being proposed for promotion to general officer rank.

[19] Azaña's thinking and reforms are surveyed and analysed in Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 18-60, 133-247, 262-84, 327-34; Ramón Salas Larrazábal, 'Las reformas de Azaña', in Hernández Sánchez-Barba and Alonso Baquer, VI. 20-69, VI. 77-81; Carolyn P. Boyd, 'Las reformas militares', in Historia General de España, XVII. 144-55; and Cardona, pp. 116-44, 163-6.

[20] '[N]o estaba mal proyectada ni era tan mala como se decía en aquella época; tenía el sectarismo de querer apartar de las filas del Ejército a la oficialidad de ideales monárquicos; pero esto no se realizó, pues...nos quedamos la mayoría.' Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco (Barcelona, 1976), p. 397.

The reserve list was integrated in the active list; but officer candidates from the non-commissioned ranks would have to pass more demanding trials than hitherto (including a period of study in the military academies) in order to get a commission. Nevertheless, in order to improve the professional and social status of the career non-commissioned officers who lacked the ability or educational requirements for a commission, Azaña created a regular non-commissioned officer corps. Prior to this, the career of the non-commissioned officer was subject to his commanding officer's approval of successive fixed-term enlistments; therefore he could actually be discharged without any compensation before reaching an age entitling him to retirement benefits.[21]

Azaña also restored the General Staff, which was organized in four sections (organization, intelligence, operations and supply). The force structure was adapted to the strength available: after the reform, the army had eight infantry divisions, one cavalry division and two brand new mountain brigades, which would be supervised by three new army general inspectorates. Azaña's reform also suppressed the territorial organization in military regions, the appointment of captain-general and the rank of lieutenant-general.[22]

Azaña also looked for fresh military leaders, in order to move beyond the hierarchy bequeathed by the monarchy. Alonso Baquer has classified the Spanish military elite of 1931 in groups based on Morris Janowitz's categories: heroic leaders (which featured conspicuous africanists), managers (including staff corps officers with proven ability as field commanders) and technicians (linked to military aviation or with extended service in the army

[21] Cardona, p. 63.
[22] CLE 1931, No. 282, No. 288, No. 337, No. 339, No. 401 and No. 444.

industrial establishments). Alonso Baquer also introduces a fourth group of his own: the 'humanist' officers. These were either colonial soldiers with experience as native affairs officers (thus combining military ability with a good understanding of the political and administrative problems in Morocco), or reformist-minded members of the military academies' teaching staff.[23]

In 1917, the career models leading to the high places in the hierarchy had been the heroic and the managerial ones. But Primo de Rivera's dictatorship had granted all the advantages to the heroic model by 1930. Azaña sought to change the situation in order to favour technicians and humanists, but they were too small a pool to choose from.[24] A result of this was that the republican regime lacked a reliable army leadership able to cope with the military conservatives' dissatisfaction with the reformist policies of the period 1931-1933.

The soundness of the reforms was damaged by the arrogant and abrasive character of Azaña, who proved to be rather insensitive to issues (e.g. ceremonial, corporate traditions) which shape the emotional conditioning of military men. Moreover, his own rhetorical fluency played a dirty trick on Azaña. In June 1931, during a political meeting in Valencia, Azaña spoke of the need for grinding down the dominance of the traditional Spanish oligarchy, as he had ground down other obstacles to Spain's progress. There was no mention of the military, but, since he had carried out a major military reform as war minister, it was easy for his adversaries to present Azaña's policy as a deliberate,

[23] Miguel Alonso Baquer, 'La selección de la elite militar española', in Hernández Sánchez-Barba and Alonso Baquer, V. 49-59; Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier. A Social and Political Portrait (New York, 1971), pp. 74-8.
[24] Miguel Alonso Baquer, 'La reforma de la enseñanza militar durante la Segunda República', in Jean-Pierre Etienvre (ed.), Les armées espagnoles et françaises. Modernisation et reforme entre les deux guerres mondiales (Madrid, 1989), p. 11.

sinister plan to destroy the army. Certainly Azaña was not wise in his choice of words in Valencia, but only hostile political partisanship can present his actual achievement as a whole as destructive for the army.[25]

Despite the contemporary criticism voiced by some conservative sections of the army, Azaña's reforms were sound from a professional point of view and were not changed in their essentials by the later right-wing cabinets (1933-1935). The reforms were the foundations for an improvement of the army's effectiveness in the long term, once the natural wastage of the retired personnel made available financial resources for equipment. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936 wrecked these prospects.

c) From reform to civil war (1933-1936).

Other scholars have already dealt in detail with the political-military evolution of the Second Republic, so pointing out a few relevant events will suffice for this section.[26] The early life of the republic had not aroused the military's enthusiasm for the new regime. The cabinet's feebleness in restraining the social unrest fostered by the radical left, and the concession of home rule to Catalonia, could not help nourishing the distrust of many officers, whose instincts were conservative. The results of the parliamentary elections of November 1933 gave a majority to the right-wing parties, which included a coalition named Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rightist Groups) or CEDA. When CEDA members were

[25] Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 21-2, 293-7.
[26] For civil-military relations from 1931 to 1936 and Gil Robles' policy, see Stanley G. Payne, Ejército y sociedad en la España liberal (1808-1936) (Madrid, 1977), pp. 395-479; Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 250-2, 307-8, 320-1; Cardona, pp. 174-247; Salas Larrazábal, 'Reformas de Azaña', VI. 73-77, VI. 81-95; and Boyd, 'Las reformas militares', pp. 156-72.

appointed to the cabinet, about one year later, the radical left started a general revolutionary strike. However, the strike quickly failed all over Spain, except in Asturias, where it took the form of an armed uprising (6-19 October 1934). The revolutionaries were defeated after the intervention of 15,000 troops - including crack units of the Army of Africa - and 3,000 members of the police forces under the overall command of Major-General Franco. The government forces lost about 300 killed and 900 wounded, whereas the toll for the rebels was 900 killed and 15,000 imprisoned.

The leader of CEDA, José María Gil Robles, was appointed war minister in May 1935. Gil Robles tried to turn the army into an instrument to prevent the left from coming back to power, so he undertook a policy oriented to win over the support of the military for his partisan purposes. Gil Robles made some minor changes in the force structure, promoted all the army subtenientes (the highest non-commissioned rank, which was abolished at the same time) to second-lieutenants, and prepared an ambitious plan of re-armament which satisfied the professional desires of the officer corps (but was also justified by an increasingly tense international environment in the Mediterranean).

This project could not be carried out because of the political crisis in the second half of 1935, after a part of the cabinet got involved in corruption scandals. President Alcalá-Zamora (a centrist politician) opted rashly for calling new elections in early 1936. On the verge of leaving office in December 1935, Gil Robles played for a while with the idea of staging a military-backed coup d'état. However, he finally discarded it because the army's conservative leadership - despite its political sympathy - still refused to join any action out-side the republican legality.

The parliamentary elections of February 1936 were won by the Popular Front, a wide left-wing coalition headed by Azaña. Despite winning with a narrow margin in the numbers of votes, the electoral rules allocated the coalition an ample majority of parliamentary seats, which was used to replace Alcalá-Zamora with Azaña in April. Azaña and the moderate sections of the Front were unable to hold in check the revolutionary bent of the more radical left. In turn, the right adopted more extreme attitudes as well, since the heated leftist rhetoric was seen as the announcement of an impending revolution. The result was a polarization of political life, which generated an escalation of political violence on the streets and finally led a section of the officer corps to think of overthrowing the government through a military putsch.

Only a relatively small number of officers (perhaps no more than one thousand), whose main organizer was Brigadier Mola, were actively engaged in the 1936 conspiracy. Nevertheless, many, if not most, officers were ready to join the uprising if their commanding officers rebelled or the plotters could get rid of the commanders loyal to the government. The murder of the conservative political leader José Calvo Sotelo by leftist policemen acting on their own on 12 July 1936 spurred the conspirators to carry out their plans within a few days. The coup d'état started on 17 July 1936 in Melilla, after a police detachment tried unsuccessfully to arrest a group of conspirators on the eve of the military uprising. Since the secrecy was broken, the rebel officers of the Army of Africa immediately got their units out of the barracks to arrest the government's civil and military authorities. Next day, the plotters at the home garrisons joined the rebellion, but they were only half-successful. The Spanish Civil War had begun.

The preceding narrative is a summary of the most significant events which formed the political-military background for the Spanish army's professional developments from the late 1910s to 1936. Some of those developments (e.g. the introduction of armour) were not essentially affected by the political-military turmoil, but the latter did influence the reform of military education. The following sections of this chapter deal with the evolution of this issue under Primo de Rivera and the Second Republic.

3. The restoration of the General Military Academy (1927-1931).

a) The origins of the second General Military Academy.

The idea of training all the army officers in a single academy remained alive in the late 1910s. In 1917, Comandante Beta - the pseudonym of a graduate of the Toledo general academy and engineer officer, José García Benítez - stood for the restoration of a general academy as the best way to solve the problem of the lack of real professional relationships among the corps of the army. Against the argument that a single academy could limit the students' choice of arm, he stated that a common military spirit must be the foundation of any career in the army. Thus an engineer officer candidate would have to prove his ability and will to become an officer before thinking of being a military engineer.[27] Actually a commission headed by General Villalba worked in 1918 to set up a single military academy again but, once more, the plan was not implemented.[28]

Despite this new miscarried attempt, a contributor to the cavalry corps journal (Memorial de Caballería) urged the military authorities, a couple of years later, to set up a general

[27] Beta, pp. 136-43.
[28] Carlos Blanco Escolá, La Academia General Militar de Zaragoza (1928-1931) (Barcelona, 1989), pp. 50-1.

academy, by arguing that the European war of 1914-1918 had shown the need for cooperation among the fighting arms. Such cooperation would be made easier if all the officers knew the essentials of the other arms' tactics through training in a single academy. The officer corps would also benefit from the comradeship fostered by a general military academy, as happened with the first one in Toledo.[29] The military authorities had certainly given little regard, if any, to practical combined arms training in the academies: indeed, infantry and artillery officer candidates did not carry out joint exercises until May 1923.[30]

General Primo de Rivera graduated from the Toledo general academy and was convinced of the benefits of common training for officers. He had made no secret of his views: during a celebration of his promotion to general officer rank in 1912, he expressed his purpose of encouraging the restoration of the centre.[31] The professional ideology of Primo de Rivera was based on a concept of the military as a whole, instead of the narrow corporate attachment to the branch of the service which had prevailed so far, especially among the artillerymen.[32]

Once he became Spain's ruler, it is hardly surprising that Primo de Rivera used his position to put his desires into practice. Although he was not acting in a vacuum, it maybe was not sheer coincidence that an essay prize offered by Memorial de Caballería on officer recruitment was won by a paper, published in early 1924 (that is, a few months after Primo de Rivera's coup d'état), proposing the restoration of a general academy. The author, a

[29] Luis Rivero, 'Unión es fuerza', Memorial de Caballería (hereafter MC), VI, 55 (January 1921), pp. 175-6.
[30] 'Prácticas de conjunto de las academias de Infantería y Artillería en el Campamento de Abades (Segovia)', LGP, VIII, 7 (July 1923), p. 14.
[31] Blanco, p. 60.
[32] Navajas, p. 40.

Captain Durango, put forward the secondary education diploma and the passing of an examination as the admission requirements. The entrance examination would not be very severe, since the actual selection would be carried out during the two years of training in the general academy. Those officer candidates who passed this stage would choose their arm of service, after being awarded their place in the order of merit. Then they would go to the schools of application with the rank of second-lieutenant. After three or four years at the arm school and as probationary officers, they would finally be commissioned as lieutenants. A result of this system was that no officer would be younger than twenty one, and all the graduates would join the regiments with some practical experience.[33]

In their essentials, Durango's views were rather similar to the schedule outlined in the decree, dated 20 February 1927, ordering the creation of the General Military Academy in Saragossa. The candidates coming straight from civil life had to be seventeen years old at the start of the year of admission and not older than twenty one (the senior age limit was extended for candidates coming from the ranks). A junior secondary education diploma was the minimum requirement to take the entrance examination. The studies at the academy lasted two years. The choice of arm would be based on the officer candidate's place in the graduation list (if the officer candidate was not satisfied, he could read some subjects for another year to improve his place in the following class list). The training in the arm academy would last three years (including probationary periods); after passing the first year, the officer candidates would be commissioned as student second-lieutenants. Once their training was finished, they would

[33] José Durango y Pardini, 'Reclutamiento de la oficialidad del Ejército, en sus diversas escalas, y ascensos en las mismas', MC, IX, 93 (March 1924), pp. 141-3.

be given their regular commission as lieutenants.[34]

This last point is noteworthy because it was a change in relation to the previous system, which commissioned infantry and cavalry students as second-lieutenants after finishing officer training. According to the decree, the change had the purpose of 'raising, through equalizing, the [officers'] class prestige...'[35] One cannot help thinking that the infantry and the cavalry perhaps had settled a score with the specialist corps, whose graduates previously left their academies promoted one rank above those of the general corps.

Nonetheless, the new academy had a primary purpose, clearly expressed at the start of the decree, more important than the organizational detail of professional training. The officer candidates would learn in the General Military Academy 'the basic [professional] education and, above all, the military spirit which must be common to all the branches of the service.'[36] This emphasis on the development of a common military ethos was to be the guideline for the teaching in the academy, and its distinctive trademark.

b) <u>Franco and the new academy</u>.

Given his backing for africanist officers, it is no surprise that Primo de Rivera chose one of them as the first commandant of the academy. It seems that General Millán Astray, founder of the <u>Tercio de Extranjeros</u> (a volunteer outfit, which recruited foreigners and Spaniards and was later named the Spanish Legion), was the first candidate; he had actually visited French military

[34] <u>CLE</u> 1927, No. 94 (articles 3 to 13).
[35] '[E]levar, igualándolo, el prestigio de clase...' <u>Ibid</u>. (Introduction).
[36] '[L]a cultura básica y, sobre todo, el espíritu militar que ha de ser común a todas las especialidades.' <u>Ibid</u>. (Introduction).

schools in 1924. But his ardent, outspoken personality had aroused many enmities within the army. The scholar Blanco Escolá suggests that, once his candidature was discarded, Millán Astray himself nominated his old collaborator in the organization of the Tercio, Brigadier Francisco Franco, to the post.[37]

Franco, who at thirty three had become the youngest general officer in Europe, was a rising star on the Spanish military landscape thanks to his achievements on the Moroccan battlefields, but he had no special qualifications to direct an educational centre. However, this was not an obstacle for the dictator, who wanted battle-hardened instructors to indoctrinate the officer candidates in the tough-minded military spirit which should characterize the officer corps.[38] From this point of view, Franco was certainly a good choice as commandant to play an exemplary role. In the important formative years of the future officers, Franco - who had reached general officer rank before being forty - was a living example of the heroic leader's professionalism so cherished by the dictator.

Franco assembled in the academy staff a select group of fellow-africanists, whose careers had been (and were to be later on) closely associated to Franco's, such as Alonso Vega, Franco Salgado-Araujo or Sueiro. Another remarkable member of the directing staff was the head of studies, Colonel Campins. He had fought with distinction in Morocco and developed an association with Franco after the early 1920s. But he also graduated at the war college and displayed a genuine interest in the academic prowess of the officer candidates. According to Blanco, this academic bent set Campins apart from many an africanist officer.

[37] Blanco, pp. 99-100. On the creation of the Spanish Legion, see Payne, Politics, pp. 155-7.
[38] Payne, Politics, p. 242.

Unfortunately for Campins, his acquaintanceship with Franco was of no use after the rebel leadership dismissed him from the command of the Granada garrison because of his hesitations in joining the 1936 uprising. Campins was court-martialed and shot a few weeks later.[39]

The style of the new teaching staff was to be different from that of the former corps academies. The reformist literature had often poured much criticism on the teachers' perfunctory ways and their preference for bookish theory, a sign of their poor quality. This was a fault stemming from the nineteenth century. General Bermúdez de Castro, who was an infantry officer candidate in the late 1870s, defined the typical academy instructor of the second half of the nineteenth century as unimaginative and easy-going, and this state of affairs seemed to continue after 1900. He compared the easy life of his teachers at the Toledo academy with that of the city cathedral's canons. Bermúdez never saw an instructor on horseback and attributed this fact, as well as the cancellation on rainy days of the single weekly session of practical training, to the poor professionalism of the teaching staff.[40] Franco himself agreed that the quality of their instructors at the Toledo academy (in the 1907-1910 period) was poor. However, some of them were redeemed by displaying their war wounds and medals for gallantry, which, according to Franco, taught the essentials about the military profession.[41] He put this idea into practice in Saragossa: the ninety teaching officers had collected a dozen Military Medals (the second highest award to military prowess and gallantry) and over fifty promotions through

[39] Blanco, pp. 127-30. Some information about Campins' conduct in the military uprising of July 1936 can be found in Manuel Rubio Cabeza, Diccionario de la guerra civil, 2 vol. (Barcelona, 1987), I. 154-5, I. 397.
[40] Luis Bermúdez de Castro y Tomás, Mosaico militar. Historias, historietas, anécdotas, episodios, alegrías, tipos y costumbres de la vida militar de antaño (Madrid, 1951), pp. 205-6.
[41] Blanco, p. 175.

war merit or selection, and half of them had been wounded in action.[42]

The historian Stanley G. Payne states that Franco was respected as an efficient commandant, although the officer candidates could not help feeling a degree of apprehension due to his disciplinarian ways.[43] This last point is contradictory to the testimony, admittedly partisan, of Franco Salgado-Araujo, who writes in his memoirs that his cousin imposed arrests only occasionally.[44] There is almost no evidence coming from the officer candidates, but the only memoir published so far leaves no doubt that Franco won high prestige among them. General Gutiérrez Mellado - who cannot be accused of nostalgic Franco-worship - remembered him as 'a superb commandant'. The officer candidates did not charge the unpleasant sides of their life in the academy to Franco, but to other members of the staff.[45]

Gutiérrez Mellado's testimony suggests that Franco, given his role as chief organizer and first commandant, took a very personal interest in the functioning of the academy. He had in the end the opportunity to mould the future members of the officer corps, and this is a privileged position for any officer committed to his profession. Moreover, after the end of the Moroccan campaigns, his was probably the most attractive post in the Spanish army for an ambitious officer, and a good performance in this appointment would be of much benefit to Franco's career. Due to these reasons,

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[42] Julio Ferrer Siquera, La Academia General Militar. Apuntes para su historia, 2 vol. (Barcelona, 1985), I. 243.
[43] Payne, Politics, pp. 242-3, 243 fn.
[44] Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mi vida, p. 82.
[45] '[U]n magnífico Director.' Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado, Un soldado de España (Barcelona, 1983), p. 52. Gutiérrez Mellado (1912-1995) entered the General Military Academy in 1929 and was commissioned in the artillery corps (1933); he ran a nationalist spying and escape network in the republican rear during the Civil War; he became lieutenant-general and chief of army general staff in 1976; as deputy prime minister for defence affairs (1976-1981), he took charge of making the armed forces accept the democratic regime after Franco's death.

it is understandable that Franco felt such sorrow when the republican government decided to close the Saragossa academy in 1931. According to Franco Salgado-Araujo, the commandant was 'deeply depressed, making no effort to conceal his great grief and worry.'[46] It is plausible that the sudden closure of the academy, joined to the shocking transition from the monarchy to the republican regime, accentuated, as Stanley G. Payne suggests, Franco's introverted bent.[47] Actually Franco lost no time in trying to bring the academy back to life. After being appointed chief of general staff in 1935, he urged War Minister Gil Robles to restore the General Military Academy, and indeed the CEDA minister announced to the parliament on 2 July 1935 his intention to open the academy again.[48]

c) <u>A different style of education</u>.

Primo de Rivera gave much significance, reflected in the 1927 decree, to the military spirit which the officer candidates should develop. He had a political-military reason for this (his wish to combat the corporate rivalries within the military) and a personal one (his preference of the officer role as heroic leader). Thus the Saragossa academy was to perform a role which, according to Primo de Rivera, the corps academies had seemingly failed to do well enough: the vocational testing of the officer candidates. In this sense, the new academy would work, as has been written of the French military academy of St Cyr, as 'a sort of novitiate, to which postulant officers came to try out their vocations and to be initiated into the rule of the order.'[49] Franco Salgado-Araujo provides evidence on the importance given in the academy to the

[46] '[M]uy abatido, sin tratar de disimular su gran dolor y emoción.' Franco Salgado-Araujo, <u>Mi vida</u>, p. 104.
[47] Stanley G. Payne, <u>Franco. El perfil de la Historia</u> (Madrid, 1992), p. 21.
[48] José María Gil Robles, <u>No fue posible la paz</u> (Barcelona, 1978), p. 247; Ferrer Siquera, I. 295.
[49] Keegan, 'Regimental ideology', p. 3.

officer candidates' military ethos. When the time for selecting candidates for entrance arrived, Franco ordered the selection board to assess in a benevolent way the sons of military men killed in action. According to Franco Salgado-Araujo, though most of them were hardly prepared to satisfy the academic standards for admission, they became fine officers due to their moral background: 'Their great spirit made good the [educational] limitations'.[50]

Since Spain's army was inspired in many respects by the French one and both armies depended on conscription, it may seem surprising that, during the organizational period of the academy, Franco chose Germany (whose army was all-volunteer) to observe her army's officer training procedures. In April 1928, Franco asked General Losada, responsible for training issues in the War Ministry, for expense allowances for a trip to the German officer school in Dresden. He argued the usefulness of the visit on the basis of the German centre's resemblance to the projected General Military Academy. Moreover, Franco thought it interesting to look at the way the German army overcame the restraints of the Versailles Treaty in training its officers (this is, by the way, an implicit acknowledgement of the limitations of the Spanish army in terms of availability of modern ordnance).[51] The visit to the German centre (the Infantry School) was approved and carried out, after a delay, in late June.[52]

The German army's officer candidates needed to prove an education entitling them to admission into an university, and were

[50] 'Su gran espíritu suplió las deficiencias.' Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mi vida, pp. 80-1.
[51] Franco to Director General de Instrucción y Administración, 18 April 1928, AGMS 2/3/55.
[52] Dirección General de Preparación de Campaña to General Director, Academia General Militar, 11 May 1928, AGMS 2/3/55; Ministerio de la Guerra, Dirección General de Preparación de Campaña, Sección de E.M., 2º Negociado to Teniente Coronel Agregado Militar a la Embajada de España en Berlín, 2 June 1928, AGMS 2/3/55.

thoroughly assessed on their psychological features. Those who were admitted served for two years in the ranks and had to prove their proficiency as junior non-commissioned officers. Then they took one year's basic officer training, in a common course for all the candidates, followed by one year's training for their chosen arm. Although cultural and scientific issues were not neglected and private study was encouraged, character (i.e. willpower and a sense of responsibility) rather than intellectual excellence per se was what the selection and training procedures looked for.[53] Franco submitted to the War Ministry a memorandum on his trip, but no copy was found in the files consulted by this writer, so it has not been possible to assess its contents.[54]

It is doubtful that Franco got much practical knowledge from his trip, given the huge differences in organization between the German officer training schedule and the Spanish one. Nevertheless, it is plausible that the visit confirmed Franco in his views about officer training - which were to be put into practice within a few months. For, although the formal educational standards for admission were lower than in Germany, the General Military Academy seems to have shared a rather similar background conception of training, and thus its syllabus seems to have been oriented more to moulding adequate features of character in the future officers than to pursuing intellectual prowess. For example, horsemanship was given great attention because, besides its physical training role, it was reckoned of benefit for the officer cadets' willpower and quick decision-making.[55]

[53] For a contemporary survey of German officer training in the mid-1920s, see Luis de la Gándara Marsella, El moderno ejército alemán (Madrid, 1925), pp. 81-9; for an assessment of this training, see Martin van Creveld, Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939-1945 (London, 1983), pp. 133-9.
[54] The memorandum is mentioned in Dirección General de Instrucción y Administración, Negociado Central to Dirección General de Preparación de Campaña, 14 August 1928, AGMS 2/3/55.
[55] Ferrer Siquera, I. 236; Blanco, p. 158.

The academy's annual report for the academic year 1929-1930 displayed the priorities of its syllabus (which was also a criticism of the older ones). It stated that the Saragossa academy avoided 'the long-standing mistake of considering pure mathematics as the sinew of all military education, to the detriment...of the preponderance which must be given to teachings which are essentially tactical and military...'[56] Moreover, the demanding fitness trials for entrance made possible that 'military drill and exercises were not halted by the lack of readiness or stamina in the trainees, as happened in previous times.'[57] This is a significant difference from the corps academies (or at least the specialist corps' ones), where there was much emphasis on academic achievement.

However, some sections of the officer corps had doubts about the achievements of the General Military Academy. Jesús Pérez Salas, a future commander in the republican army, wrote (after the Civil War) that the staff of the corps academies were appalled by the ignorance of the officer candidates coming from the Saragossa academy, where scientific and technical matters had been so neglected that their essentials had to be taught again.[58] On the contrary, the conservative military essayist Nazario Cebreiros thought that the five years' officer training was still too long and that the syllabus of the Saragossa academy still included too much academic content, in order to make up for the limited general

[56] '[E]l error mantenido durante tantos años de considerar las matemáticas puras como el nervio de toda la enseñanza militar, con menoscabo...del predominio que deberán tener las enseñanzas eminentemente tácticas y militares...' Academia General Militar, Memoria del curso de 1929-30 (Saragossa, 1931), p. 50.

[57] '[L]a instrucción y los ejercicios militares no se viesen cortadas por la falta de preparación o de fortaleza física de los educandos, como en épocas anteriores sucedía.' Ibid., p. 51.

[58] Jesús Pérez Salas, Guerra en España (1936 a 1939). Bosquejo del problema militar español; de las causas de la guerra y del desarrollo de la misma (Mexico D.F., 1947), p. 86. Pérez Salas was an infantry officer who conspired against Primo de Rivera and later became a member of Azaña's military private office at the War Ministry; during the Civil War, he joined the republican side, rose to colonel and became divisional and army corps commander; still, his thoroughgoing professionalism disapproved of the revolutionary tinges of the republican army.

education of the officer candidates and because this centre allegedly could not help obliging the specialist corps' demands.[59]

It is difficult to asses the fairness of these judgements. Pérez Salas and Cebreiros fail to explain what they meant by 'poor' or 'excessive' scientific content in the education of officers, so there is no way to contrast their statements with the academy's syllabus. This, according to Gutiérrez Mellado (a future artillery officer), was well balanced in theoretical content and outdoor training.[60] Moreover, he makes no mention of educational deficiencies when arriving at his arm academy. Nonetheless, it can be argued that his testimony has limited value, since the kind of indoctrination imbued at the Saragossa academy was perhaps so effective as to prevent him from developing any critical assessment of his own training.

Was this indoctrination oriented to non-professional, political goals? It is again hard to give a straight answer. The Spanish officers' accounts and memoirs are often so biased by ideological partisanship that it is difficult to separate pure professional assessment from political criticism. Franco Salgado-Araujo, a close associate of the commandant, could write nothing but praise of the academy's ethos and achievements.[61]

On the contary, officers who in the 1920s and during the Civil War were hostile to Primo de Rivera and Franco expressed negative judgements on the General Military Academy. Cordón, a communist from the early 1930s on, described the academy as a reactionary centre which inculcated in the officer candidates a caste spirit

[59] Cebreiros, pp. 217-9.
[60] Gutiérrez Mellado, p. 52.
[61] His service in the academy is recalled in Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mi vida, pp. 77-104.

and a fascist sense of discipline and loyalty to the leader.[62] Pérez Salas, exiled after 1939, shared this view: the academy produced 'complete horsemen, fine players in several sport games...and, above all, [officers with] a frightening africanist spirit.' This kind of training, according to Pérez Salas, made the officer candidates very receptive to the ideas of fascist-like organizations like Falange (a political party founded in 1933 by Primo de Rivera's eldest son José Antonio).[63]

Nonetheless, it is reasonable to think that General Franco, as organizer and first commandant, stamped to some degree features of his own weltanschauung on the academy's ethos.[64] This would help to explain the large number of Saragossa graduates who joined the military rebellion of 1936 - about 90-95 per cent, against 60-80 per cent (these last figures vary according to the scholars) of the officer corps as a whole.[65]

4. Military education under the Second Republic, 1931-1936.

a) Azaña's reform and military education.

On 30 June 1931, the republican government ordered the closing of the General Military Academy. The arguments used were the illegality of its creation (since Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, in breaking with the constitutional regime, had no legitimacy), and the squandering of personnel and financial resources caused by the existing officer training system (which maintained five major academies and was disproportionate to the real needs of the army).[66] However, Cebreiros attributed the decision to the alleged

[62] Cordón, p. 193.
[63] '[J]inetes consumados, excelentes jugadores en diversos deportes... y, sobre todo, con un espíritu africano que aterraba.' Pérez Salas, p. 86.
[64] Carlos Blanco reckons Franco's highly conservative ideas as the main source of the Saragossa academy's indoctrination: Blanco, pp. 100-2, 126-7, 181-2.
[65] Busquets, pp. 120-1.
[66] CLE 1931, No. 410.

anti-military thinking of Azaña and the pressure of those interested in the disappearance of the Saragossa academy: the interest group of the old academies (formed by teaching staff, textbook writers and preparatory school teachers) and the artillery officers, who wished a return to the system of separate education.[67] Cordón thought that the General Military Academy's alleged reactionary indoctrination justified the government's decision. However, he acknowledged (something quite unusual for an artilleryman) that the idea of a single academy was good, because this strengthened the unity of the officer corps, and he suggested that it would have been wiser to substitute a commandant and a teaching staff more sympathetic to the republican regime for Franco's team.[68]

Military education was reorganized by a decree dated 30 June 1931 as well. Officer training would be divided into two centres: the Infantry, Cavalry and Quartermaster Academy (Toledo), and the Artillery and Engineer Academy (Segovia). Their syllabi would last four semesters; the officer candidates would be commissioned as second-lieutenants after finishing the third semester, and they would graduate as lieutenants.[69] Although this was a step backwards in relation to the benefits of common basic training for the officer corps' professionalism, it was not a return to the 1893 system. Actually the new organization resembled that of France and Britain, where general and technical corps were trained separately in two major academies (St Cyr and the École Polytechnique; Sandhurst and Woolwich).[70]

The requirements for entrance into the military academies were

[67] Cebreiros, pp. 212-3, 221.
[68] Cordón, p. 193-4.
[69] CLE 1931, No. 412 (articles 1 and 2).
[70] Alpert, Reforma militar, p. 255.

detailed by the 1932 act on officer recruitment and promotion.[71] Officer candidates coming straight from civil life should be eighteen years old at least, have the senior secondary education diploma and have passed a number of subjects in a university. They also had to fulfil six months' regimental service in their arm of choice; after this service, their commanding officers would give them a certificate as proof of their military aptitude. During the academy years, officer candidates would be trained in the duties of company officers up to the rank of captain.[72]

In the annual intakes of the academies, 60 per cent of the posts would be reserved for non-commissioned officers. These would belong to two groups: i) senior and middle-ranking non-commissioned officers who voluntarily sat the admission examinations; and ii) senior non-commissioned officers who, after a number of years of service, had to sit an entrance examination compulsorily. Those of the first group who passed the examinations would follow the same syllabus as the officer candidates of civilian background, while those of the second group would only take one year's training. The students of the three groups would attend a common course of application and joint exercises.[73]

b) <u>Continuity and innovation in the recruitment of officers</u>.

Although the 1932 act introduced significant changes in relation to the previous ways of recruiting officers, the purpose of this section will be to prove, through evidence coming from Spanish professional and military-related literature, that major points of the reform had been put forward during the three previous decades. Therefore, the reform of military education under Azaña was not

[71] <u>CLE</u> 1932, No. 506.
[72] <u>Ibid</u>. (articles 3, 4 and 5).
[73] <u>Ibid</u>. (articles 3 and 5).

radical in its foundations, since it limited itself to implementing proposals advanced by other essayists.

The requirement for raising the recruitment age of officers was an old desire of reformists. In 1902, an article in Revista Científico-Militar argued that candidates should be seventeen years old at least since their personality would have matured at a natural pace, instead of imposing maturity artificially on teenagers at the military academies; whatever the short-term benefits, demanding excessive responsibility during these early years might be harmful for the officers' personality in the long term.[74] Almost two decades later, the dynastic liberal politician the Count of Romanones recommended, in an essay on military reform, that the minimum age for officer candidates should be eighteen.[75] The same year (1920), a regular contributor to the cavalry's official journal proposed not to commission any officer candidate until he came of age.[76] And in an officer training schedule proposed by a Captain García Miranda and published in the infantry corps journal in 1925, no officer candidate should be taken into an academy before being seventeen years old.[77] It is evident that the decision taken in 1932 had found support in the military literature before.

It is true that the minimum age for entrance had also been raised in the General Military Academy, but this was not accompanied by its educational equivalent, a full secondary education. Although Romanones did not mention explicitly a full

[74] 'Academias militares', RCM, XXVII (1902), p. 10.
[75] Conde de Romanones [Alvaro de Figueroa], El ejército y la política. Apuntes sobre la organización militar y el presupuesto de la guerra (Madrid, 1920), p. 170-1. Romanones was a conspicuous politician of Alfonso XIII's reign, who held office several times as minister and prime minister, although he never got the war portfolio.
[76] A., 'La oficialidad de nuestros dias', MC, V, 49 (July 1920), p. 9.
[77] José García Miranda, 'Proyecto de reformas en el Reclutamiento de la oficialidad de nuestro Ejército', MI, XIV, 158 (March 1925), p. 166.

secondary education, this requirement is rather obvious when he wrote that officer candidates should prove an adequate level of general education, in order not to waste time during the first years at the academy by reading non-professional subjects.[78] The same requirement can be deduced when, about the same time as Romanones, the previously mentioned contributor to the cavalry journal wrote that officer candidates should get an education similar to that entitling them to university entrance.[79]

Indeed, the 1932 act went a step beyond the preceding proposals by demanding a certain level of university education. Although the decree gave no detail on which subjects should be taken, it seems that the actual practice was that candidates passed the first year's courses in a faculty of science.[80] Romanones had actually suggested that some non-military matters could be read in civilian educational institutions and thus the academies' teaching could be focused on military subjects.[81] Nevertheless, the 1932 act was timid by comparison with the proposal made by a Major Belda in 1924. He suggested that officer candidates should first take a degree in science. This requirement would provide candidates who were more mature physically and psychologically, whose decision to follow the military career would be more thoughtful and no longer conditioned by the need to earn a living (since they could look for civil jobs thanks to their university education). Moreover, sharing higher education would bring the officer corps nearer to the civilian society.[82]

Belda's proposal shows that the idea of giving university

[78] Romanones, pp. 169-70.
[79] A., 'La oficialidad', MC, V, 49, p. 9.
[80] Cardona, p. 149 fn 10.
[81] Romanones, pp. 172-3.
[82] Luis Belda, 'Ideas sobre el reclutamiento, escalas y preparación profesional del Oficial de Infantería', MI, XIII, 150 (July 1924), pp. 17-8.

education to officer candidates was not reckoned alien to the military spirit (at least by a number of officers). It is interesting to contrast such a proposal with General Mola's views. Mola thought that the requirement of university education was an anti-military device, an exposure to the indiscipline and the corrosive ideas which, according to Mola, prevailed among the students. Thus the military values which made up the basis of the officer corps would never take root.[83]

Another significant break with past military education was the introduction of compulsory service in the ranks before admission into the military academies. In 1905, Captain Herrera de la Rosa had already praised the Japanese practice (taken in turn from the German army) of demanding one year's service in the ranks, as a good way to judge if officer candidates had the endurance and the sense of discipline needed for military life.[84] During the early 1920s, this requirement of preliminary service in the ranks was a common recommendation of the reformist essayists on officer training. But, by contrast with the six months of the 1932 reform, they proposed a longer term (one year).[85] Another difference was that they often demanded that candidates achieve promotion to non-commissioned rank.[86] Major Belda went further to propose that candidates should get a commission as officers of the complementary list (which provided the reservist officers) before

[83] Mola, p. 1072.
[84] Capitán Herrera de la Rosa, Impresiones recogidas de la campaña ruso-japonesa con el ejército del general barón Nogui, pp. 18-9, 30 November 1905, AGMS 2/8/152. The Japanese army had been organized on the German model in the 1880s: Enciclopedia Espasa sv 'Japón', XXVIII-ii. 2497.
[85] A., 'La oficialidad', MC, V, 49, p. 9; García Miranda, 'Proyecto de reformas', p. 166; Belda, 'Ideas', p. 18; Miguel Ponte y Manso de Zuñiga, 'Reclutamiento de la oficialidad del Ejército, en sus diversas escalas, y ascensos en las mismas', MC, IX, 96 (June 1924), p. 374. Ponte (1882-1952) was commissioned in the cavalry (1897) and reached general officer rank in Morocco; he left the service in 1931 and turned into a monarchist conspirator; during the Civil War, Ponte held senior commands on the nationalist Aragonese and central fronts; he signed the letter sent in 1943 by a group of generals asking Franco for the restoration of the monarchy.
[86] Romanones, p. 169; Ponte, 'Reclutamiento', pp. 375-6; García Miranda, 'Proyecto de reformas', p. 16.

sitting the examinations for entrance into a military academy.[87]

General Mola saw preliminary training in the ranks as a positive step, in contrast with the studies in the university where officer candidates would supposedly be exposed to the harmful influence of their civil classmates.[88] But could not this training be a disturbing experience for the future officers as well? Compulsory military service, as implemented in Spain, was unpopular, and the poorly motivated conscripts could be receptive, via anti-militarist propaganda, to leftist doctrines. In fact, the army (or the conservative section of the military at least) seems to have rated poorly the political reliability of conscripts at that time. Primo de Rivera's dictatorship undertook a program of 'moral education' for the rank and file, which was actually a program of ideological indoctrination for conscripts, especially for those coming from a urban working-class background.[89] Once such indoctrination disappeared under the republican regime, officer candidates would probably have been exposed to the kind of 'subversive' ideas loathed by Mola. Although their influence is impossible to assess for sure, and was probably exaggerated by the conservative-minded officers, left-wing organizations certainly worked to set up underground networks within the barracks and win over the conscripts in the early 1930s.[90] Perhaps the desire to remove future officers from this exposure was one of the reasons behind Gil Robles' unsuccessful bill to restore the General Military Academy, which included the abolition of the six months' term in the ranks (July 1935).[91]

[87] Belda, 'Ideas', p. 18.
[88] Mola, pp. 1069-70.
[89] Navajas, pp. 242-59.
[90] Payne, Politics, pp. 304-5.
[91] Gil Robles presented a bill to parliament in July 1935 in order to restore the General Military Academy. The bill suppressed the requirement for university studies (which allegedly deterred many candidates) and previous military service (which was reckoned ineffective), and it extended

It is noteworthy that the requirement of service in the ranks was a distinctive feature of the German army and has been reckoned by some historians as one of the reasons behind the German officers' fine performance in the First and Second World Wars.[92] However, this preliminary training in the ranks was also introduced by the French army before the Great War, and the result was unsuccessful.[93] Therefore any claim that previous contact with the rank and file would have improved the quality of the Spanish junior officers cannot be accepted at face value. But the republican officer training system was too short-lived to reach any conclusion on this issue (and, indeed, on the effectiveness of the 1932 reform as a whole).

Reformist essayists had also pointed out before 1932 the need for limiting training in the academies to the essential subjects required by a junior officer's duties.[94] The reform satisfied such a view, and even Cebreiros, one of the harshest critics of Azaña, acknowledged this as a wise move. He wrote that this reform was an official acceptance at last that officer candidates had to be trained only as subalterns - not as generals as well - in the military academies.[95]

The 1932 reform also included the creation of compulsory promotion courses, which forced officers to keep their professional expertise up to date. The neglect of professional education after the academy period had already been denounced many

the training to five years (two in the general academy and three in the corps academy). However, the bill did not get parliamentary support. In November 1935, Gil Robles got approval for another bill which extended officer training to three years: DOMG, 6 July 1935, 3 November 1935 and 26 November 1935; Ferrer Siquera, I. 295; Salas Larrazábal, 'Reformas de Azaña', VI. 75, VI. 329 n 215.

[92] Barnett, pp. 25-26; Creveld, Fighting Power, p. 129.

[93] Barnett, pp. 26.

[94] Rufino Ginés, 'Reclutamiento de oficiales', MI, X, 112 (May 1921), p. 315; A.F.B. y P. de A., p. 55.

[95] Cebreiros, pp. 224-5, 228-9.

years before by Captain Gallego.[96] Cordón admitted that as the average officer advanced in his career, his professional knowledge diminished, instead of increasing. Cordón wrote in an outspoken way that 'most of us [the junior officers] reckoned each promotion, from the rank of captain upwards, as a step forward to professional ignorance...'.[97] In order to correct this situation, besides avoiding the worst effects of the closed list, the 1932 act required captains to pass a proficiency course in the arm academy before promotion to the rank of major.[98] This solution had been put forward several years before in the pages of Memorial de Caballería and in a reformist essay.[99] However, this part of the 1932 act was not implemented in practice, according to Salas Larrazábal. Even if the proficiency course had been implemented, it would soon have lost much - if not all - of its value as a means of selection for priority promotion, since the re-ordering of seniority in the list after the course was abolished by Gil Robles.[100]

Promotion to higher command was influenced by the new organization of military education as well. Under the 1932 act, colonels had to pass a course - one year long - in a brand new Centre of Higher Military Studies as a requirement for promotion to general officer rank.[101] And, once more, at least one case of demand for a centre which would train the future generals of the Spanish army can be found in a professional journal, a decade before.[102]

[96] Gallego, Proyecto de reorganización, p. 18.
[97] '[C]ada ascenso, a partir del de capitán, lo considerásemos la mayoría de nosotros como un paso más hacia la incultura profesional...'. Cordón, p. 71.
[98] CLE 1932, No. 506 (article 14).
[99] A., 'La oficialidad de nuestros dias', MC, V, 50 (August 1920), pp. 97-8; A.F.B. y P. de A., p. 55.
[100] Salas Larrazábal, 'Reformas de Azaña', VI. 66, VI. 76, VI. 329 n 217
[101] CLE 1932, No. 506 (article 16).
[102] A., 'El problema del generalato', MC, VI, 58 (April 1921), pp. 228-30.

c) <u>The democratization of the officer corps</u>.

Azaña wanted to open the officer corps to candidates from a wider social background in order to get a 'democratic' military in tune with the new regime's spirit. A way to achieve such a purpose was the reservation of a large number of academy vacancies for non-commissioned officers. As was the case with the other points of the reform, there had already been proposals to increase the numbers of officers coming from the ranks. In 1920, a contributor to <u>Memorial de Caballería</u> argued that half of the regular officer corps should be made up of former non-commissioned officers.[103] A Major Ginés complained of the uselessness in wartime of the reserve list and of the disagreements this list caused within the officer corps. As a better way to get officers from the non-commissioned ranks, he suggested preserving up to two thirds of the student posts in the academies for non-commissioned officers with adequate educational qualifications.[104]

Cebreiros admitted that a larger number of officers coming from the ranks was beneficial, but not because he agreed with the democratic goals of Azaña. According to Cebreiros, the officers coming straight from civil life would pursue much better careers than before. Though a half of the company grade appointments could be held by former non-commissioned officers, the older age of these would limit their chances of promotion to senior rank.[105] That is, since these officers were often older than those who had entered the academies straight from civil life, the former were more likely now to reach the retirement age with a relatively low rank (this had been less likely in the separate - but less packed - reserve list).

[103] A., 'La oficialidad', <u>MC</u>, V, 50, p. 97.
[104] Ginés, 'Reclutamiento', p. 313-5.
[105] Cebreiros, pp. 269-70.

However, Azaña's plan had a serious weakness. As the conservative member of parliament Tomás Peire - formerly one of Azaña's military assistants in the ministry before leaving the army - pointed out, the minister's goals were hardly achievable due to the low educational level of the Spanish non-commissioned officers. It seemed disproportionate to reserve 60 per cent of academy posts for candidates of non-commissioned rank, when, on average, they had made up only 5 per cent of the academy graduates by 1930.[106] Peire had a point: unless the educational standards for admission were lowered, few non-commissioned officers would be able to enter the military academies in the short term under the conditions set by Azaña.

The figures for the intake of officer candidates who entered the military academies after the 1932 reform prove beyond doubt the gap between the theory and the reality, but the potential of the non-commissioned ranks cannot be underrated either, although it did not satisfy the act's sanguine expectations. The first summons for the new military academies (September 1933) offered 280 vacancies (of which 168 were reserved for non-commissioned officers). Only eight non-commissioned officers passed the entrance examinations.[107] In the second summons (March 1935), there were 190 vacancies; this time at least 40 per cent of them were reserved for non-commissioned officers. The list of 139 candidates who passed the entrance examinations (released in January 1936) included 42 non-commissioned officers and 30 second-lieutenants; the latter were surely subtenientes who had sat the compulsory examinations set in the 1932 act for senior non-commissioned officers but had been promoted to second-lieutenants after the

[106] Tomás Peire, Una política militar expuesta ante las Cortes Constituyentes (Madrid, 1933), p. 23; for other critical views during the parliamentary discussion, see Alpert, Reforma militar, p. 249.
[107] Salas Larrazábal, 'Reformas de Azaña', VI. 80.

abolition of their rank under Gil Robles (nonetheless, these new second-lieutenants would have to pass through a military academy to be promoted to lieutenants).[108]

The second summons' figures were a substantial improvement: probably more non-commissioned officers took more interest in or had a longer time for their preparatory studies. Nonetheless, the percentage (37.8 per cent) still fell short of the 1932 act's original goal, which could only be fully achieved by raising the educational level and by encouraging study among the non-commissioned ranks. The 1932 act was removed from Spain's social reality (Alpert suggests that Azaña perhaps was not too involved in the drafting of the bill). Therefore, the republican reform could not attract overnight social groups different from those which traditionally had produced candidates for a career in the officer corps.[109]

5. The reform of higher military education (1927-1932).

The reformist efforts of Primo de Rivera and the Second Republic also reached the training of staff officers. The same decree which restored the General Military Academy also included the essential features of a new organization of higher military education. The ESG would turn into the Escuela de Estudios Superiores Militares (Higher Military Studies College) or EESM. The students would be captains who had at least two years' experience as unit commanders, and field officers.[110] The EESM was made up of two sections: military and industrial.[111] This reorganization meant a triumph of the view of the military as a corporate unity over the

[108] DOMG, 11 December 1935; Salas Larrazábal, 'Reformas de Azaña', VI. 80, VI. 330 n 239; Alpert, Reforma militar, p. 251.
[109] Alpert, Reforma militar, p. 250.
[110] CLE 1927, No. 94 (article 17).
[111] Ibid. (article 18).

more parochial esprit de corps of the branches of the service which had prevailed before.

The industrial section would provide teaching in three specialities: chemistry and metallurgy, military construction, and electricity and mechanics. The studies would last two years plus a period of practice, and their goal was to train specialist engineers in the manufacture of ordnance and in industrial management and mobilization.[112] In other words, this meant that the technical and industrial responsibilities which justified the heavy scientific content in the training of artillery and engineer officers were snatched away from the specialist corps. Such a policy had been put forward before. A Captain Moreno had proposed in 1911 the creation of a military industrial corps, which would assume the technical and manufacturing functions of the artillery and engineers corps. A decade later, a Major de Pazos repeated the same proposal.[113] Both essayists were infantry officers, and it seems plausible that their views were shared by large sections of the general corps. Limiting professional training and duties to tactical and unit command issues meant that all the corps would be on an equal footing, without special responsibilities justifying different corporate educational levels within the military. Such an egalitarian status was a requirement to foster a common military spirit within the officer corps, and it is no surprise that Primo de Rivera picked the idea as a part of his policy to promote the corporate unity of the military.

Primo de Rivera and the general corps were not the only ones standing for a separate branch of military industrial engineers. The Count of Romanones also echoed this desire in suggesting that

[112] Ibid. (articles 18 and 20).
[113] Moreno y Alvarez, 'Instrucción y reclutamiento', p. 261; M. de Pazos y Zamora, 'Las especialidades', MI, X, 112 (May 1921), pp. 317-8.

a number of artillery and engineer officer candidates should get additional technical training in their academies and, after graduation, should be appointed permanently to military factories.[114]

The military section of the EESM would train officers to perform staff duties. After two years' training plus a period of practice, the students would graduate as diplomados. Since article 20 of the decree stated that graduates would never leave their corps of origin after taking the staff diploma, the 1927 reorganization was also a death sentence for the staff corps, which would disappear by natural wastage.[115]

The fact that Primo de Rivera decided to suppress the staff corps at that time seems somewhat paradoxical. According to Mola, senior officers of the corps, far from being absorbed in bureaucratic paperwork, were ready and able to perform as column commanders in the Moroccan campaigns of 1924-1927, unlike those of the facultative corps. Mola wrote of the latter: 'Not to get out of the headquarters area was more comfortable for the colonels and lieutenant-colonels of the artillery and engineers corps - and perhaps they reckoned this more scientific.'[116] Actually Primo de Rivera did not harm the corps before 1927. And two outstanding staff corps officers, Fanjul and Goded, were promoted to general rank in 1926 because of their prowess in the field. These officers' performance in the Moroccan campaigns proved that the preparation and conduct of military operations had replaced the corps' old scientific-oriented functions.[117] But it is clear that Primo de Rivera, although acknowledging and rewarding individual

[114] Romanones, pp. 171-2.
[115] CLE 1927, No. 94 (articles 18 and 20).
[116] 'A los coroneles y tenientes coroneles de Artillería e Ingenieros les era más cómodo -y tal vez lo juzgaran más científico- no salirse del area de los cuarteles generales.' Mola, pp. 1025-6.
[117] Alonso Baquer, Ejército en la sociedad, pp. 287-8.

merit, was determined to erase the sources of discord within the military, such as the existence of a separate corps of staff officers.

Azaña closed the EESM and restored the War College through a decree dated 21 July 1931.[118] According to Cebreiros, the industrial section was abolished to satisfy the artillerymen; scientific and technical teaching was thus returned to the Segovia academy, preventing the infantry and the cavalry from having their own ordnance engineering specialists.[119] But Azaña's legislation did not mean a full restoration of the old corporatism. In 1932, the officer recruitment and promotion act ordered that, thenceforward, staff duties would be performed by captains and field officers with the staff diploma and it declared the staff corps would be 'wasted away' (a extinguir); that is, no more officers would join the corps, which would disappear through natural wastage.[120] This was the end of a corporate struggle which had lasted from General Cassola's time as war minister.

But this did not necessarily mean an definitive end of the quarrels affecting the staff officers as a whole. Mola wrote about the existence within the military of a faction which rejected the idea that staff college graduates were entitled to priority in appointments near the high command. The destruction of the staff corps was not enough for this faction, which would then turn on the diplomados, according to Mola.[121]

Mola did not speculate on this issue. Cebreiros did not hide his hostility to the alleged privileges of the diplomados. After Azaña became war minister, the staff diploma was required for

[118] CLE 1931, No. 513.
[119] Cebreiros, pp. 225-6.
[120] CLE 1932, No. 506 (article 6 and transitory arrangement No. 3).
[121] Mola, pp. 971-2.

appointments in the General Staff. However, Cebreiros rejected the idea that staff graduates deserved to monopolize these appointments, because, according to him, the former's professional expertise was not (indeed never had been) worthy of such a right.[122] Rejecting an officer of proven ability for a general staff post because he had not taken formal staff training for it would perhaps be unfair. But such possible unfairness is hardly the best argument to lambast - as Cebreiros does - the professional quality of the staff graduates as a whole.

The soundness of the reforms of 1927-1932 is proved by the fact that most of them were adopted after 1939. Officer candidates would take basic officer training in the restored General Military Academy and specialist training in the arm academy; the diplomados would graduate in the Staff College (Escuela de Estado Mayor); specialist engineers of ordnance and construction (who formed a separate corps thenceforth) would be trained in a military technical college (Escuela Politécnica Superior del Ejército); passing a course of proficiency for field grade would be necessary before promotion to the rank of major; and attendance at a new war college (Escuela Superior del Ejército) became a requirement for promotion to general officer rank.[123]

The reform of military education was an issue directly affecting corporate interests within the officer corps, and since the defence of these interests was one of the main reasons for the involvement of the military in politics, it was inevitable that, in turn, political factors weighed on the decisions about military education. Primo de Rivera's organization of military education was essentially sound. Common training in the same academy

[122] Cebreiros, pp. 150-2.
[123] Historia fuerzas armadas, IV. 257-8, IV. 260-5, IV. 276-9, V. 61-2.

provided to the future officers much of the mutual trust and understanding needed for inter-arms cooperation. On the other hand, since training factory managers and ordnance specialists is not the primary role of a military academy, it was a sensible arrangement to set up a separate centre to satisfy those officers with a technical bent.

Unfortunately, Primo de Rivera's opponents tended to see only political partisanship behind the 1927 reform (and, to the extent that the dictator used military policy as a way to bolster his regime, they had a point). Therefore, when Primo de Rivera fell, his reform soon followed him, because politics prevailed over professional usefulness. An exception of sorts was the abolition of the staff corps: a step implied in the creation of the EESM which was formally taken by the republican government.

Azaña's reform was certainly a step back in relation to basic officer training, but it at least avoided the fragmentation existing before 1927. On the other hand, it took practical measures to raise the educational level of the officer corps from entrance into the academies to promotion to general officer rank. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the republican reform cannot be assessed since no officer candidate who entered the military academies after 1932 had joined the officer corps when the Civil War broke out. The officers who were commissioned under the Second Republic came from the General Military Academy, belonged to ancillary corps (e.g. legal and medical officers) or were subtenientes promoted by Gil Robles. This last group also was mainly responsible for the increase in size of the officer corps from 1932 to 1936 (the 1936 army yearbook recorded 2,997 officers more than in the 1932 issue).[124] Finally, as happened to Primo de

[124] Salas Larrazábal, 'Reformas de Azaña', VI. 80-1.

Rivera, Azaña was often criticized on the basis of political assessments (the alleged anti-military purposes behind his reform) rather than as a result of sober professional analysis.

6.- DOCTRINAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION, 1916-1936.

The First World War (1914-1918) brought about significant changes in warfare, which forced all the armies involved to work out new military doctrines. The Spanish army was a spectator of that major conflict and had to cope with the new professional developments after 1918.[1] After looking at the Spanish army's reactions to the First World War and to its own experience in Morocco in the 1910s, this chapter will survey two significant issues of the 1918-1936 period: the development of a new operational doctrine (embodied in the 1925 field service regulations) and the introduction of a new model major unit (the composite brigade).

1. The debate on the lessons of the First World War.

a) The new face of battle in Spanish professional literature.

Unlike the armies of the major European powers, the Spanish army did not follow the evolution of warfare through actual fighting experience in the First World War.[2] Nevertheless, the War Ministry made an effort to gather information on the professional aspects of the war. One way to do this was through military observers, a role played by the Spanish military attachés in the belligerent countries and commissioners sent for this purpose. Several commissions of Spanish observers visited the fighting armies at the invitation of their respective governments. Some renowned

[1] Scholarship on the evolution of warfare from 1914 to the late 1930s has focused on the developments in the First World War and on mechanization after 1918. For an overview of the 1914-1918 period, see Strachan, pp. 130-49; and G.D. Sheffield, 'Blitzkrieg and Attrition: Land Operations in Europe 1919-45', in Colin McInnes and G.D. Sheffield (eds.), Warfare in the Twentieth Century. Theory and Practice (London, 1988), pp. 51-64. The discussion of some contemporary professional issues in the Spanish military has been surveyed briefly in Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 68-71, 74-81.

[2] Although Spain was a neutral country, most officers were germanófilos (Germanophile) because they admired the German military prowess and sympathised with the authoritarian tinges of Wilhelmine Germany: Boyd, Praetorian Politics, pp. 45-6.

essayists (e.g. General Burguete, Captain de la Gándara) were among the officers chosen for these appointments. In 1917, two commissions of observers visited the German army and another one was sent to the Austro-Hungarian army, whereas a permanent commission was set up in France after November 1914 and three commissions visited the British army (one in 1916 and two in 1917).[3]

These investigations were reflected in the professional literature. The War Ministry created a journal (La Guerra y su preparación) in 1916, to be edited and published by the General Staff. Its main sources were the military attachés' reports from the belligerent countries and, to a lesser extent, abridged versions of memoranda written by the observers sent to the war fronts.[4] Since this writer has found almost no other records on this subject in the military archives he had access to, La Guerra y su preparación and other professional journals provide most evidence on the reactions within the Spanish military with regard to the changes in warfare in the period 1914-1918.

Luis Fernández España, an infantry colonel and editor of Estudios Militares, recognized in early 1915 the increase in the use of field fortifications and in infantry and artillery fire power as outstanding features of the conflict. However, he saw the stagnation of operations on the Western Front as a temporary pause, mainly due to the exhaustion of the armies. Thus, according to Fernández España, the absence of mobile warfare was a result of the belligerents' desire to rest, not of an inability to undertake offensives.[5] Although the shape of military operations had changed

[3] Fernando Redondo Díaz, 'Los observadores militares españoles en la Primera Guerra Mundial', RHM, XXIX, 59 (July-December 1985), pp. 199-208.
[4] Ibid., pp. 198-9.
[5] Luis Fernández España, 'Orientaciones alrededor de la guerra de hoy', EM, XXXIV, 1 (January-June 1915), pp. 70-1, 131-3.

much from the pre-war expectations, many Spanish military essayists kept interpreting the former according to the accepted terms of the latter. Thus, Colonel Banús wrote in 1916: '[W]e have never doubted that in the current [war] there would be a confirmation of the eternal principles which have ruled all the campaigns and given victory to the great captains.'[6]

A sector of the military was unwilling to accept the changes that technology (i.e. the material, non-human factor) had caused in the face of battle. A student at the War College, Captain Anaya, recognized by 1916 that fire power, in forcing armies to dig successive lines of trenches, had brought about a halt to manoeuvre warfare. But he also maintained that men remained the basic factor due to the increase of the armies' numerical strength, which was necessary to break through the enemy front.[7] Even the counter-measures forced by the increased fire power were explained as the triumph of human initiative: '[E]xperience has told us that man has beaten materiel...and he has beaten it because, in putting the means of his intelligence and will to work in the service of his self-preservation, he has deduced the absolute need of underground warfare...'[8]

But such an attitude, although widespread, did not apply to all the military essayists. Major-General Marvá made very lucid remarks about the increased dehumanization and material nature of war by early 1916:

> [The current war is] on the technical side the rule of

[6] '[N]unca hemos dudado de que en la actual se verían confirmados los eternos principios que han regido en todas las campañas, y que han dado el triunfo a los Grandes Capitanes.' Carlos Banús, 'La estrategia en la guerra moderna', MI, V, Special issue (January 1916), p. 183.
[7] Francisco Anaya Ruíz, 'De la guerra mundial. Impresiones hispanófilas', RTIC, XXVI, 1 (January-June 1916), pp. 412-4, 457.
[8] '[L]a experiencia nos ha dicho que el hombre ha vencido al material...y lo ha vencido, porque, poniendo en función los resortes de su inteligencia y voluntad al servicio de su propia conservación, dedujo la necesidad de la guerra subterranea...' Enrique Albert, 'La Infantería en la Gran Guerra', MI, VII, 75 (April 1918), pp. 288.

the machine; on the side of art, the drowning of inspiration; on the tactical side, the diminished importance of manoeuvre; on the strategic side, the enlargement of the stage to encompass the entire planet.

The drama is earning in magnitude what it loses in gallantry; the sense of destruction grows sharper and victory comes through the mechanical accumulation of battalions and devices. Success does not surrender to the bayonet but to the missile; not to the most skillful formation but to the highest explosive; rather than man, it is due to industry and money.[9]

Nonetheless, shrewd contemporary minds understood that this change in the features of battle had not affected all the levels of warfare. Major Goded, one of the ablest officers of the staff corps, pointed out in early 1918 the need to study all the theatres of operations, instead of focusing on the Western Front. There had been no simultaneous and prolonged stagnation over all the fronts, except for short periods; the defensive was chosen on one front to move the mass of manoeuvre to the other and wage a more mobile war there; the battles of the Eastern Front and the Isonzo (Caporetto) proved that breakthroughs were still possible. Therefore tactical doctrine and the means of warfare were what had changed after 1914.[10]

b) **Bayonet diehards, Morocco and the need for new tactics**.

For those fond of the traditional, morale-based, pre-war values,

[9] '[E]n lo tecnico, la soberanía de la maquina; en lo artístico, el ahogo de la inspiración; en lo táctico, amenguada la importancia de la maniobra; en lo estratégico, el agigantamiento del escenario sobre toda la faz del planeta.
El drama va ganando en magnitud lo que pierde en gallardía; el sentido de la destrucción se agudiza y se vence, no tanto por las felices combinaciones del genio, como por el mecánico amontonamiento de batallones y artefactos. El éxito no se rinde a la bayoneta, sino al proyectil; no a la más hábil formación, sino al mas alto explosivo; más que al hombre, débese a la industria y al dinero.' José Marvá y Mayer, 'Algo sobre la guerra actual', MI, V, Special issue (January 1916), pp. 457-8.

[10] Manuel Goded y Llopis, 'Campaña de invasion de Servia en 1915', LGP, III, 4 (April 1918), pp. 368-72. Searching for lessons in the Eastern Front was also proposed in Francisco del Rosal, 'La trinchera en la actual guerra', MI, VI, 71 (December 1917), pp. 492-3. Commissioned in the infantry, Goded (1882-1936) joined the staff corps in 1905; he pursued an outstanding career in Morocco, where he became chief of staff of the Army of Africa; he was army general inspector under the right-wing republican cabinets; he joined his command of the Balearic Islands to the 1936 military uprising and flew to Barcelona, where he was captured, court-martialed and shot after the rebel defeat there.

the essence of infantry fighting remained allegedly the same: a vigorous bayonet attack. The bayonet certainly had produced psychological effects on the battlefield before the First World War, and the British army lectured their troops on the Western Front on this weapon's virtues for the sake of morale.[11] But many in the Spanish military seem to have interpreted the rhetoric on this weapon in too literal a way. For instance, the military attaché in Vienna, Major Fernández de Villa-Abrile, summed up his report on the Austrian-Hungarian infantry assault procedures this way in April 1916: '[Q]uick and resolute leaps, small volume of fire and a lot of heart, the ultimate argument is the bayonet; the latter, as usual, is what writes the last word on the breast of the conquered!'[12]

The battle was conceived as a clash of fighting spirits, in which technology had no place. Worse, it could be a negative factor for the fighting man's morale. Even an essayist encouraging a higher number of machine guns in the infantry units concluded that infantry had 'proven that, despite the progress of firearms, the bayonet...still is what settles the fiercest fighting and preserves unharmed...their renown as queen of battles.'[13] Another critic of the increasing role of ordnance in tactics was Brigadier Burguete, who wrote in 1917 that 'the main weapon is the heart and [the latter] is proven by marching forward; instinct must drag

[11] V. G. Kiernan, European Empires from Conquest to Collapse, 1815-1960 (London, 1982), p. 35; for a mocking view of the British army's lectures on the bayonet, see the remembrances of Siegfried Sassoon, quoted in John Ellis, The Social History of the Machine Gun (London, 1987), pp. 126-7.

[12] '[S]altos rápidos y decididos, poco fuego y mucho corazón, la razón suprema es la bayoneta; ¡ella, como siempre, es la que escribe la última palabra en el pecho del vencido!' Respuestas a las 14 preguntas de la circular del E.M.C. de 19 febrero último, 18 April 1916, AGMS 2/4/153. Fernández de Villa-Abrile (1878-1946) was GOC 2nd Division (Seville) in July 1936; arrested by the rebel officers because of his loyalty to the government, he was discharged from the service in late 1936; a court-martial sentenced him later to six years' imprisonment.

[13] '[D]emostrado que, a despecho del progreso de las armas de fuego, la bayoneta...sigue siendo la que resuelve los combates más encarnizados y conservando incólume, por lo tanto, el renombre de reina de las batallas.' Juan Génova, 'Las armas automáticas modernas', MI, V, Special issue (January 1916), p. 350.

[the soldier] to thrust the bayonet in the enemy's breast.'[14] Since the machine could not beat the spirit, there was no reason for the introduction of new weaponry. Quite the contrary:

> [P]oisoned in spirit and stunned in mind with the wrong idea that 'the machine is all and the man, nothing', [some people] look to the machine for the remedy and turn the infantry into a collection of coolies carrying...a thousand devices, of occasional use [whose only effect is] the disappearance of infantry by creating another [false infantry] which only preserves the name of this arm...[15]

This view seems to have been widespread within the army, and quite probably even survived the war. Despite the experiences of the previous three years, an officer still lamented by 1918 that the infantryman had to carry equipment such as gas masks, hand grenades and so on, because 'victory lies in the point of the bayonet.'[16]

It is noteworthy that, by contrast with these views which opposed specialization within the infantry, the cavalry seemed to consider specialization as a solution for their survival. The cavalry, deprived by the new features of warfare of its traditional role, tried to remain an independent arm through a transformation into a sort of maid of all work combining the fighting procedures of the infantry and the cavalry. According to Major Dolla, this new model cavalry had to include machine guns, cyclists, motorized riflemen, and sappers.[17] Another essayist proposed the organization of a 'heavy' cavalry trained and equipped for foot and trench fighting; although fighting beside

[14] '[E]l arma principal es el corazón y...se prueba avanzando; el instinto ha de arrastrarle a clavar la bayoneta en el pecho del enemigo.' Ricardo Burguete, La ciencia militar ante la guerra europea. Su evolución y transformación hasta el presente y el porvenir (Barcelona, 1917), p. 503.
[15] '[E]nvenenado el espíritu y aturdida la mente con la erronea idea de que "la máquina lo es todo y el hombre nada"... buscan en la máquina el remedio, y convierten a la infantería en un conjunto de compañías de colies portadoras de...mil ingenios, de uso ocasional....la desaparición de la infantería, creando otra, que sólo tiene de tal el nombre...' Ibid., pp. 473-4.
[16] '[L]a victoria está en la punta de la bayoneta.' Antonio Vera Salas, 'Impresiones de un curso de tiro en Valdemoro', MI, VII, 83 (December 1918), p. 442.
[17] Angel Dolla, 'La caballería en la guerra actual', MI, V, Special issue (January 1916), p. 222-3.

the infantry most of the time, they would not become mounted infantry because they would allegedly be able to ride and fight with the traditional cavalry elán when the opportunity arose.[18] However, this essayist gave no details about how this cavalry's mounts were supposed to follow their riders closely enough on the battlefield to allow them to charge in time.

In contrast with the views mentioned above, a number of officers did understand the changing nature of the battlefield, in a partial way at least. Captain Epifanio Gascueña, who had elaborated on the willingness to accept great losses in the offensive by the time the war broke out, admitted in May 1915 that fire power had reduced fighting to the two arms (infantry and artillery) whose tactics depended on it; even more, victory could be achieved with less blood lost by relying on artillery fire. Thus fighting was to depend on the close liaison and cooperation of both arms.[19] Another essayist reckoned that extended periods of static fighting along fortified fronts had become a feature of regular warfare. Since fire power was the essential factor in this kind of warfare, the automatic rifle would be a necessary weapon for infantry besides the machine gun.[20]

The Spanish military experience in Morocco during the 1910s displayed to the most thoughtful minds of the army the need to adapt tactics to the increased fire power, even in a colonial war against an irregular enemy. Captain Gascueña deplored the careless procedures used by the Spanish forces. Commanders were too eager to go into action and move forward. This meant sometimes that the

[18] Pedro Pablo Corral, 'Estudio sobre el empleo de la Caballería en la guerra moderna', LGP, III, 12 (December 1918), p. 651.
[19] Epifanio Gascueña, 'La Artillería es hoy el Arma hermana de la Infantería', MI, IV, 41 (May 1915), pp. 424-8.
[20] Enrique Iniesta, 'Ideas sobre la influencia de la actual guerra europea en el moderno arte de combate', MI, V, 51 (April 1916), pp. 207, 210.

selection of emplacements for the artillery was neglected, and that the artillery were not given enough time to provide effective fire support.[21] The artillery corps historian Vigón, moreover, points out that artillery fire during an operation was not coordinated by a single command: the artillery units were divided into penny packets and scattered among the field columns, thus losing much of their effectiveness.[22] Gascueña urged his colleagues, either fighting in Morocco or training at home, to take more account of the time needed by the artillery to go into action and provide effective fire support. And the officers at the headquarters should also restrain their impulses to ride to the firing line to the detriment of their main duties in the coordination of operations.[23]

General Berenguer, the ablest colonial soldier of the Spanish army at that time, emphasized the need for tactical changes in a book based on his Moroccan experiences and published in 1918. Berenguer stated that the Spanish infantry had to replace the thick skirmishing line used hitherto with a thinner one. Front line stretches of small tactical value could even be left unoccupied whenever they could be covered by fire from the neighbouring ones. Thus the number of troops used in the front line (and therefore exposed to becoming casualties) would be smaller.[24]

Machine guns played a conspicuous role in the new tactics

[21] Epifanio Gascueña, 'El enlace de las armas con aplicación al estudio táctico de una campaña moderna', EM, XXXV, 2 (July-December 1916), p. 119.
[22] Vigón, Artillería española, III. 183.
[23] Gascueña, 'El enlace de las armas', p. 119.
[24] Dámaso Berenguer, La guerra en Marruecos (ensayo de una adaptación táctica) (Madrid, 1918), pp. 100-1. Graduated at the General Military Academy and commissioned in the cavalry, Berenguer (1871-1947) fought in Cuba; service in Morocco (1909-1915) speeded up his career (he rose from lieutenant-colonel to major-general in nine years); he organized the first unit of regulares in 1911; high commissioner in Morocco (1919-1922), he was later court-martialed under charges of negligence leading to the disaster of Annual but Primo de Rivera pardoned him in 1924.

envisaged by Berenguer, since they were well suited to cover a discontinuous front line with a smaller strength. Moreover, the machine gun delivered effective infantry fire power at ranges at which the riflemen's fire did not, and therefore it made tangible the Spanish army's technological superiority over the Moroccan bands. Machine guns should be under the control of basic fighting units, and only in exceptional cases should their command be assumed by higher headquarters.[25] Indeed there was an official awareness of the importance of the machine gun, since the scale of machine guns in the units fighting in Morocco was increased in 1919: a machine gun company (four machine guns) was created within every infantry battalion, as well as in every regimental group of regulares; the cavalry regiments received a six-machine gun squadron, and each district command was allocated a heavy machine gun company (twelve machine guns).[26]

Nonetheless, Berenguer, in his own account of his campaigns, admitted that the Spanish army's official tactical doctrines were outdated by 1919 due to the evolution of warfare during the First World War. There were no official regulations for the use of automatic firearms in the front line, of large masses of artillery under a single command, or of aircraft as an offensive weapon and a tool for intelligence gathering.[27]

2. The search for a new Spanish military doctrine, 1919-1936.

a) Coping with a new way of warfare.

After the guns fell silent in Europe, military essayists started to assess how far warfare had been transformed during the conflict. A section of the Spanish military saw the increased

[25] Ibid., pp. 101-2, 107-8.
[26] Servicio Histórico Militar, Campañas de Marruecos, III. 55 fn 28.
[27] Dámaso Berenguer, Campañas en el Rif y Yebala, 2 vol. (Madrid, 1948), I. 250-1.

reliance on materiél as a form of decay of the military art; such a reliance, coupled with the massive use of manpower, would allegedly lead to a stagnation similar to the Western Front. For instance, a regular contributor to the cavalry corps journal criticized the mass armies which had led to an unnecessary prolongation of war and its subsequent social disturbances; moreover, small nations had been wrong in aping the 'nation in arms' doctrine, since this would never make good their imbalance in relation to the major powers.[28]

However, the French army, which became the model to be imitated due to its final victory in 1918, was to found its post-war doctrine on the predominance of fire power over manoeuvre.[29] A consequence, which was not unnoticed in Spain, was that the French tactical regulations were virtually to take for granted that a future war would again see fortified fronts.[30] In 1921, Captain Maquieira, who was against the slavish imitation of the French doctrine, deplored such thinking. It fostered a defensive mentality (such as that which got hold of the French by 1917, according to Maquieira) which could not be dispelled by envisaging limited counter-offensives. Moreover, carrying out these counter-offensives required substantial superiority of military means.[31] Maquieira seems to suggest in this last point that the Spanish army's poverty of material resources was another reason not to follow the French doctrine too closely.

Curiously, the military attaché in France, Colonel García Benítez, interpreted the French army's first post-war regulations

[28] A., 'La posición del Ejército frente a las enseñanzas de la guerra mundial', MC, IV, 31 (January 1919), pp. 50-1.
[29] Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 74-5; Robert Allan Doughty, The Seeds of Disaster. The Development of French Army Doctrine, 1919-1939 (Hamden, 1985), pp. 74-5, 91-3.
[30] A., 'La doctrina francesa acerca de la Caballería', MC, V, 51 (September 1920), p. 175.
[31] Enrique Maquieira, 'Ideas francesas sobre la ofensiva', MI, X, 113 (June 1921), pp. 402-6.

as a return to the principles prevailing on the eve of the First World War. The stalemate of the Western Front had only been due to a massive accumulation of material resources by the belligerents. No material factor alone but the arrival of the American troops finally broke the balance of strength. As a result, García Benítez stated, the French army was discarding principles such as 'the artillery conquers, the infantry occupy' and returning to those of the pre-war period.[32] Scholarship on the French post-war doctrine shows that the views of Colonel García Benítez were wishful thinking, which reflected discomfort about the new realities of warfare.[33]

Though, as will be shown later, the French army doctrine was the main guideline, some professional articles leave no doubt that ideas on the predominance of human-related factors in warfare still had force in sections of the Spanish military, though they were not so publicised as before. In the period 1919-1920, the cavalry corps journal echoed them through one of its most regular contributors. This essayist asserted the value of the 'psychological' principles of warfare, unaffected by technological change, and argued that tactical doctrine could not depend on the number and quality of new weapons: '[W]e shall ask once more if it is appropriate to build a whole system on so fragile a foundation as that of the semi-portable weapons.'[34] He considered machine guns, mortars and hand grenades as weapons of occasional use, and deplored the creation of sub-units of specialist troops in the fighting arms.[35]

[32] Juan García Benítez, 'Regresión hacia los principios anteriores a la guerra, en el Ejército francés', LGP, VI, 2 (February 1921), pp. 124-5.
[33] Doughty, pp. 73-5, 79-81, 84-5.
[34] '[P]reguntaremos una vez más si es pertinente el edificar todo un sistema sobre un cimiento tan deleznable como es el de las armas semiportátiles.' A., '¿Potencia de fuego o potencia de maniobra?', MC, V, 48 (June 1920), p. 42.
[35] A., 'Lo ocasional y lo permanente. La aviación y la disimulación', MC, IV, 32 (February 1919), p. 102; and 'Contra las tendencias modernistas', MC, IV, 35 (May 1919), p. 363.

Such thinking met a forceful reply in an article by Major de la Gándara in 1921. He criticized the attitudes of that section of the military which deplored the adoption of new weaponry for the infantry by alleging that this step would restrain mobility and would lead to the death of manoeuvre warfare. De la Gándara thought that these views were retrogressive and based on armchair theoretical reflection, which reasoned as if the clock should be put back half a century. On the contrary, the empirical experience of warfare had forced the armies to adopt new weapons in order to cope with innovations unknown twenty-five years before, such as the automatic machine gun. If the progress of technology and industry had brought obstacles to mobility in warfare, this same progress was providing the means to overcome the obstacles through the automobile transport and, maybe, in the not too distant future, the aircraft.[36] De la Gándara admitted that these retrograde essayists had a point in arguing that a repetition of the Western Front's conditions would be scarcely possible. But even if future conflicts did not create long fortified fronts, the weaker armies would resort to the advantages of the ground and to the tactical use of field fortifications to compensate for their numerical or material inferiority.[37]

The present writer's survey of the Spanish professional literature has not found significant evidence of anti-machine thinking after the early 1920s. Probably the fact that French-inspired doctrine was officially adopted by the Spanish army inhibited the essayists from expressing their views openly, when the latter were not totally in tune, so to speak, with official thinking. Moreover, there was the undeniable fact that the French

[36] Luis de la Gándara, 'El material y el armamento de la infantería en la guerra mundial', MI, X, 115 (August 1921), pp. 106-9.
[37] Luis de la Gándara, 'El material y el armamento de la infantería en la guerra mundial', MI, X, 116 (September 1921), pp. 177-8.

army had won the war. But the idea of the importance of morale certainly remained alive. In the early 1930s, a Major Rodríguez Urbano emphasized the importance of morale in terms echoing the literature before 1914: 'The combat is nothing but a struggle between two wills. Above...all the armaments, always shines that intense, purifying flame, where selfishness and ambitions are melted down, which is called military morale and which decides victory.'[38] It would be an interesting subject for further research (which is beyond this thesis' scope) to find out to what extent this kind of thinking became linked to non-democratic political ideologies by that date (1933). Rodríguez Urbano complained that, notwithstanding the value of the spirit, 'the power of numbers triumphs in the elections, and this same power prevails, or tries to prevail, in the social struggles which turn more virulent every day...'. In his eyes, almost every social class seemed to be dominated by a materialistic attitude to life.[39]

Finally, mention must be made of the issue, brought out by Alpert, of the Spanish military's alleged interest in German army organization and doctrine in the 1928-1931 period.[40] This writer thinks that there is not enough evidence to reach such a conclusion, since Alpert's argument is based on the contributions to professional journals of Lieutenant-colonel Juan Beigbeder, the military attaché in Berlin. Certainly Beigbeder took a keen interest in increasing the contacts with the German army.[41] The

[38] 'El combate no es sino una lucha entre dos voluntades. Por encima...de todos los armamentos, luce siempre esa llama intensa, purificadora, donde se funden egoismos y ambiciones, que se llama moral militar y que es la que determina el triunfo.' [Francisco] Rodríguez Urbano, Polémica sobre el combate (ensayo de una organización militar) (Barcelona, 1933), p. 156.
[39] '[T]riunfa la fuerza del numero en los comicios, y esta misma fuerza se impone, o pretende imponerse, en las luchas sociales que cada día adquieren mayor virulencia...' Ibid., p. 83.
[40] Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 69-71.
[41] See the correspondence between Beigbeder and the War Ministry filed in AGMS 2/3/55. Juan Beigbeder (1888-1957) was commissioned as an engineer officer and later entered the staff corps;

letter which Beigbeder sent on 19 March 1928 to General Gutiérrez Chaume (head of the general staff section of the General Directorate for Preparation of Field Operations) is very clear about the former's views. Beigbeder encouraged the Spanish military authorities to send hand-picked officers to Germany, where they would get first hand knowledge and experience of German doctrine in artillery, infantry, and gas warfare and technology (several months later Beigbeder also thought it possible to send one officer to the clandestine staff course). Beigbeder thought that the German practice was interesting because the German military had to work under conditions of under-equipment. The Versailles Treaty prevented Germany from having several kinds of ordnance (heavy artillery, tanks, aircraft), but these restraints were overcome by efforts of imagination, hard work and study. The Spanish army, with its traditional shortage of resources, could learn from the German ways in order to improve its professional proficiency.[42] Beigbeder's correspondence is interesting, but it only shows an individual effort. There is no further evidence available which points to a widespread desire for closer cooperation with the German military.

b) <u>The making of the 1925 regulations</u>.

The Spanish army renewed its operations in Morocco after 1918 with an outdated tactical doctrine which took little account of the fire power of modern weapons. On the other hand, the Moroccan natives learnt to use field fortifications and, after 1921, they had the artillery captured in the Spanish defeat in Annual. Thus the Spanish artillery had to improvise in this theatre of

after long service in Morocco, he was military attaché in Paris and Berlin; a lieutenant-colonel in 1936, Beigbeder joined the nationalist side when the Civil War broke out and became high commissar in Spanish Morocco (1936-1939); he was foreign affairs minister (1939-40) and retired with general officer rank and devoted himself to scholarship and business.

[42] Beigbeder to Gutiérrez Chaume, 19 March 1928 and 6 July 1928, AGMS 2/3/55.

operations a new doctrine for the use of their fire power. The Spanish artillery was now required to destroy enemy field fortifications and deliver counter-battery fire, in addition to the previous missions of support to the columns and punitive shelling. This enlarged role led to the creation of artillery groups under a single artillery commander, separate from the batteries attached to the field columns. The artillery group, called masa de artillería (artillery mass), would carry out overall fire plans for each operation (and, when needed, would deliver additional artillery fire power to individual field columns).[43] This was one of the few practical lessons the Spanish army learnt from its Moroccan campaigns, which, according to the introduction of the General Staff's new guidelines on tactical doctrine (Doctrina para el empleo táctico de las Armas y los Servicios), published in 1924, had not provided many useful lessons.[44]

The Spanish army took the French army as its major source of military doctrine in the 1920s. This writer's research has only found one piece of official documentary evidence on this issue, but it goes far to prove that the French post-war doctrine weighed heavily on the Spanish one. This piece of evidence is a report on a paper written by the head of the General Staff's Sixth Section (military doctrine) for the working group on the reform of the field service regulations.[45] The report is undated, but it was written after February 1923, when the General Staff was reorganized and the 6th Section took charge of doctrinal affairs.[46]

[43] Berenguer, Campañas, pp. 251-2; Vigón, Artillería española, III. 188.
[44] Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, Doctrina para el empleo táctico de las Armas y los Servicios (1924), p. 3.
[45] Doctrina Táctica. Informe del Cor de EM Jefe de la 2ª [sic] Sección que llevará a la Ponencia designada por la Junta de Jefes del Centro, n.d., AGMS 2/8/535.
[46] The General Staff was reorganized on 21 February 1923: CLE 1923, No. 67.

The General Staff had set up a working group (ponencia) which had to survey the main features of modern warfare, and the role, equipment and organization of the fighting arms. The group, in turn, asked the head of the Sixth Section, Colonel Enrique Ruíz-Fornells, for guidelines on which it could base its work. Ruíz-Fornells submitted a paper which actually outlined a draft of regulations for the employment of major units, that is, an outline of new field service regulations. The report of the working group on Ruíz-Fornells' paper praised the soundness of its doctrinal foundations and pointed out that this soundness was backed by its coincidence with the doctrine of the French army, the highest contemporary authority in warfare matters, according to the working group. Such a doctrine had been set forth, among other French regulations, in the 1921 instructions on the employment of major units.[47] Nonetheless, as will be shown later, the working group made some remarks on whether certain aspects were applicable in the Spanish case.

The Spanish doctrine for military operations finally took shape in the Reglamento para el empleo táctico de las Grandes Unidades (Regulations for the Tactical Employment of Major Units) of 1925. Although this writer has not found any evidence on this point, it is rather plausible that the regulations' contents were influenced by those of Ruíz-Fornells's paper. The contemporary essayists certainly had small doubt about the Gallic influence. Major Román López Muñiz went so far as to state that the Spanish regulations were essentially a copy of the French ones of 1921.[48] Major Ungría, a staff corps officer and one of the editors of the 1925 regulations, felt no shame about copying foreign models: '[The

[47] Doctrina Táctica. Informe del Cor de EM Jefe de la 2ª [sic] Sección que llevará a la Ponencia designada por la Junta de Jefes del Centro, n.d., pp. i-ii, AGMS 2/8/535.
[48] R[omán] López Muñiz, Los procedimientos tácticos vigentes en la actualidad (ensayo de táctica comparada) (Toledo, 1929), p. 6.

regulations] are copies because they must be a copy; are we to fall into the naive aim of inventing tactics of our own alone?' Ungría based his assertion on Spain's dependence on foreign military technology and on the fact that the Spanish army's professional experience during the last hundred years had been limited to colonial and civil wars.[49]

c) Fire power and manoeuvre in the 1925 regulations.

The 1925 regulations stated that modern weapons had radically increased the importance of fire power: 'Fire plays a prevailing role in combat...Fire superiority is the best protection against the enemy's elements of destruction.'[50] Although tactics were based on the combination of fire and movement, movement seemed implicitly subordinated to fire. The regulations stated that the effect of fire made movement easier, and the latter should be carried out by echelons; every echelon would move forward covered by the fire of the others until reaching the objective.[51] The aim of manoeuvre would be to achieve a material advantage over the enemy forces by inflicting physical damage in order to weaken their morale until they gave up. Moral superiority was a consequence of the material superiority, and it must not be reckoned as a direct effect of a manoeuvre which had just started.[52]

[49] 'Copias son, porque copias deben ser; ¿es que vamos a caer en la inocente aspiración de inventar una táctica exclusivamente nuestra?' José Ungría, 'Los estudios tácticos en la Escuela de Guerra de París', LGP, X, 5 (May 1925), p. 518. Commissioned in the infantry, Ungría (1890-1968) joined the staff corps in 1915; he studied at the French war college and was liaison officer in the French-Spanish campaign in Morocco; he served as military attaché in France, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands; a lieutenant-colonel in 1936, he escaped from the republican territory and was appointed head of the nationalist army's intelligence and security service from late 1937 to the end of the war.

[50] 'El fuego desempeña en el combate un papel preponderante...La superioridad de fuego es la mejor protección contra los elementos de destrucción del enemigo.' Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, Reglamento para el empleo táctico de las Grandes Unidades (1925) (hereafter quoted as RGU 1925), article 111.

[51] Ibid., article 111.

[52] Ibid., article 136.

As a result, the superiority of the offensive was no longer asserted as an axiom and, as an essayist remarked, the Spanish doctrine was rather impartial on this point.[53] The emphasis was put now on the goal of the battle, and the ways to achieve it would depend on the circumstances. The purpose of battle, according to the 1925 regulations, was 'the moral and physical destruction of the enemy; if [the battle] is offensive, by driving him out of his positions, by breaking his lines, and by pursuing him...; if it is defensive, by driving his attacks back and by thwarting his advance.'[54]

The prevalence of fire was echoed in minor tactics, most significantly in those of the infantry. López Muñiz pointed out how the firing regulations for small arms gave a pre-eminent role in combat to fire power. In order to neutralize the enemy fire during the attack, the advancing infantry had to achieve fire superiority. No attack would be successful without being prepared and accompanied by fire supremacy over the enemy. This key idea of supremacy had to be applied in the offensive (fire power which moves forward) and in the defence (fire power which holds up).[55] Since fire supremacy should always accompany the infantry's advance, it was logical that the infantry units had increased after the First World War the scale of means to deliver fire power of their own, from heavy machine guns to mortars and rifle grenades.[56]

However, this last development was not liked in the late 1910s

[53] Emilio Pardo, 'La doctrina militar española después de la guerra de 1914-1918', MI, XXV, 3 (March 1936), p. 96.
[54] '[L]a destrucción moral y material del adversario; si es offensiva, arrojándole de sus posiciones, rompiendo sus lineas y persiguiéndole...; si es defensiva, rechazando sus ataques e impidiendo su avance.' RGU 1925, article 106.
[55] López Muñiz, Procedimientos tácticos, pp. 11-2.
[56] Emilio Pardo, 'La doctrina militar española después de la guerra de 1914-1918', MI, XXV, 1 (January 1936), p. 26.

and the early 1920s by some sections of the military, as has been shown above. The working group surveying the lessons of contemporary warfare sided with these sections. Ruíz-Fornells' paper had proposed the inclusion of infantry guns and mortars at battalion level and a specialist platoon of assault sappers (equipped with flame-throwers, demolition charges and smoke grenades) in the infantry regiment's establishment. The working group expressed its disagreement because it reckoned that all this ordnance would limit the mobility of the infantry regiment in so hilly a country as Spain. The working group actually thought that infantry guns could not stay for long in very advanced emplacements without being exposed to enemy fire. Moreover, all that infantry support weaponry would be operated better by artillerymen and engineers (and even so, artillery pieces in an accompanying role would find difficulties in supporting the infantry from the most advanced echelon).[57] For different reasons, the artillery, the fire power arm par excellence, was also displeased by this development. An editorial review in the artillery journal of the French regulations of 1921 (which influenced the Spanish ones of 1925) pointed out that these regulations, although giving great preponderance to the artillery, stressed too much the importance of the aircraft, infantry heavy weapons, and the tank.[58] In view of the Spanish military's background of corporate rivalries, the displeasure of the artillerymen is not surprising.

d) The cooperation of infantry and artillery.

With hindsight, the artillery's early dissatisfaction with the

[57] Doctrina Táctica. Informe del Cor de EM Jefe de la 2ª [sic] Sección que llevará a la Ponencia designada por la Junta de Jefes del Centro, n.d., pp. xiv, xviii-xix, AGMS 2/8/535.
[58] 'L'Instruction provisoire sur l'emploie tactique des grandes unités', MA, LXXVII, 2 (July-December 1922), p. 511.

French regulations turns out to be paradoxical, for the 1925 regulations were to put the Spanish army in contact with the concept of 'the methodical battle', which was the foundation of French military doctrine after 1918. The conduct of the methodical battle was characterized by the overall subordination of operations to the action of the artillery. This, in turn, required a specific style of command and control.[59] As the 1925 regulations put it, the artillery 'will have all the more facility to concentrate their fire the more centralized is their command.'[60] How did the Spanish army cope with the problems of the methodical battle?

The idea that modern combat after the First World War was to turn into a slow and methodical affair, due to the extended use of strong field fortifications and massive fire power (especially artillery fire) had already been set forth by a Captain García Nieto in the infantry journal in early 1921.[61] The 1925 regulations exalted the status of the infantry as the queen of the battlefield, 'the arm whose success all the other ones must work for.'[62] However, the regulations later made a more sober assessment of the capacities of this arm; its capacity to hold ground unsupported was recognized, but 'its limited offensive capacity requires the support...of the artillery, with which it has to keep so close a liaison that both actually form a whole.'[63] In practice, the division's infantry commanders had no authority over the artillery, which was controlled by the divisional commander; centralization was the rule for the tactical employment

[59] Doughty, pp. 74-5, 81-3, 99-100.
[60] '[T]endrá tanta más facilidad para concentrar sus fuegos cuanto más centralizado esté su mando.' RGU 1925, article 48.
[61] Carlos García Nieto, 'Comentarios tácticos', MI, X, 110 (March 1921), pp. 146-7.
[62] '[E]l arma en provecho de la cual deben actuar todas las demás.' RGU 1925, art 29.
[63] '[S]u limitada capacidad ofensiva exige el apoyo...de la Artillería, con la que ha de enlazar de modo tan íntimo que en realidad, formen un todo único.' RGU 1925, article 32.

of the artillery.[64] Only in exceptional cases would artillery troops be attached temporarily to an infantry unit and subordinated to the latter's commander.[65]

General Ruíz-Fornells justified the need for such centralization in 1935. If the divisional artillery was divided among the infantry units, the latter would be embarrassed in their movements, according to Ruíz-Fornells. There would be no unity in the division's manoeuvre because every subordinate commander would carry out the plan according to his personal judgement; thus targets of tactical importance for the division as a whole could be left unshelled. And the divisional commander would be unable to shift fire power all around the division's operational area.[66]

On the other hand, Major López Muñiz reckoned that the result of this procedure was inflexibility in the divisional tactics, which were hardly suitable for mobile warfare. Moreover, centralization of tactical command and artillery support at the divisional headquarters made it difficult to organize and use combined arms task forces at brigade and regimental level.[67] He summed up the official doctrine and his own judgement on it this way:

> Centralization, artillery support not under the infantry's command, narrow combat fronts, systematic deployment of units, stereotyped procedures, absence of manoeuvre, overall rigidity and too detailed orders are the features [of] our current tactical rules.[68]

The working of a centralized procedure of command such as that adopted by the French army after 1918 also put a heavy burden on

[64] López Muñiz, Procedimientos tácticos, pp. 53-8.
[65] RGU 1925, article 48.
[66] Enrique Ruíz-Fornells, 'Datos para la decisión', MI, XXIV, 6 (June 1935), p. 180.
[67] R[omán] López Muñiz, Comentarios sobre doctrina, organización y procedimientos tácticos. (Notas orientadas al estudio del problema en nuestro Ejército) (Toledo, 1934), pp. 140-2, 155-6.
[68] 'Centralización, artillería de apoyo pero no bajo el mando de la infantería, frentes estrechos de combate, encuadramiento sistemático de las unidades, procedimientos metodizados, carencia de maniobra, rigidez del conjunto y ordenes excesivamente minuciosas son las características [...] nuestras normas tácticas vigentes.' Ibid., p. 146.

the staff officers at headquarters.[69] The reluctance to delegate authority to lower command levels meant long, excessively detailed processes for the preparation of operational orders. The Spanish 1925 regulations suffered from this malady, as was eloquently revealed by General Rodríguez del Barrio. He was the director of the manoeuvres carried out in the autumn of 1932 in the Pisuerga River area, which simulated operations at army corps level. In his report on the manoeuvres, Rodríguez del Barrio wrote that the strict application of the 1925 regulations caused insoluble situations; as he pointed out, this was not surprising because the regulations were based on the French ones and these had been born from a kind of warfare where time and material means were plentiful.[70]

Article 164 of the 1925 regulations, which dealt with the functions of the army corps commander, described the preparation of orders for offensive operations. The orders had to include a detailed study of the terrain (incorporating maps); then copies of the orders had to be made and delivered to the subordinate commanders. The experience of the manoeuvres had shown that the drafting of orders required eight hours at least; the copying process required a roughly similar time, and the delivery added several hours more. The total time consumed in the procedure was a full day. Since the commander could not make decisions before knowing all the events of the day and being informed by his intelligence officer, the work could not start until late afternoon. This meant that the orders could not be issued to the divisions and the brigades early next morning (and even when they

[69] Doughty, p. 110.
[70] [Angel Rodríguez del Barrio], Grandes Maniobras del Pisuerga. Otoño de 1932. Memoria (Madrid, 1932), p. 8. Rodríguez del Barrio was one of the general inspectors of the army under the Second Republic; involved in the early stages of the military conspiracy of 1936, he became estranged later because of illness and died before the uprising.

were issued, the headquarters of these units then had to prepare their own orders). Therefore, Rodríguez del Barrio wrote that new procedures (faster, more realistic and better adapted to mobile warfare) should replace those in force in the regulations.[71]

A point to consider is why the Spanish military were not aware of the flaws of the regulations until 1932, about six years after their official sanction. The only plausible explanation is the absence of large-scale manoeuvres or headquarters exercises to test the new doctrine. Shortage of resources is only a partial reason for this; professional neglect emerges as a stronger reason, if the reader bears in mind the German case (in which professional commitment and ingenuity mitigated material shortcomings).

3. Towards a new model of major unit.

a) The infantry division in the Spanish army, 1914-1931.

According to the Spanish army doctrine, a major unit was a formation whose organization included troops of all arms and service corps.[72] The standing major unit of the Spanish army in the early twentieth century was the infantry division. By 1914, its theoretical organization was roughly similar in combat troops to that of the French infantry division. Both had four infantry regiments (of three battalions each), grouped into two brigades, as well as one field artillery regiment, one or two engineer companies, and service support units. The main differences were that the Spanish division had one cavalry regiment (the French unit had only one squadron) and it was also stronger in engineers and service support units than the French division. This was due to the fact that the army corps was the major operational unit in

[71] Ibid., pp. 106-7.
[72] RGU 1925, article 92.

France, whereas in the Spanish army the division was considered as a self-contained unit with a capacity to operate on its own.[73]

The developments of the First World War led the belligerent European armies to reduce the number of infantry units and increase the artillery strength within the division. By 1918, the standard infantry division had nine infantry battalions (divided into three regiments or brigades) and a larger scale of cannon.[74] This organization, called triangular (ternaria in the Spanish military vocabulary), was to be the norm after the conflict was over.

The 1918 army reform act introduced a new organization of the Spanish infantry division. This major unit, the main one in peacetime and whose organization would remain intact in case of war, was called división orgánica (organized or standing division). Its organization included two infantry brigades (of two regiments each) and a field artillery brigade (one light regiment and one heavy regiment). The divisional organization also included a sapper battalion, a signals (telegraph) company, a lighting platoon, and service units of undetermined strength; when necessary, the standing division would receive cavalry troops detached from the cavalry divisions. Sixteen standing divisions were to be be formed.[75] It is clear that the Spanish army only partly followed the foreign experience. The strength of the divisional artillery was hugely increased, but there was no cut in infantry troops.

Moreover, its organization in brigades and regiments remained

[73] Emilio Pardo, 'La doctrina militar española después de la guerra de 1914-1918', MI, XXV, 2 (February 1936), p. 58.
[74] Pardo, 'La doctrina militar española' (February 1936), pp. 58-9; G[regorio] López Muñiz (ed.), Diccionario enciclopédico de la guerra, 13 vol. (Madrid, 1958), V. 709-11; Bidwell and Graham, pp. 139, 303 n 134.
[75] CLE 1918, No 169 (annexe 1, 3rd basis, items a] and b]).

binary (binaria), that is, based on sub-groupings of two combat units. This kind of organization has the disadvantage of limiting the commanding officer's capacity to intervene in the conduct of an operation through the employment of a third (or reserve) manoeuvre force. Such forces at the disposal of a commander either do not exist if both sub-groupings are employed, or must be improvised with troops detached from the standing sub-groupings (thus weakening the parent units).[76]

An issue discussed in the professional literature was whether the 1918 divisional organization was too cumbersome and inflexible for the conditions of warfare in Spanish territory. Considering the experience of the First World War, a regular contributor to the cavalry journal stated in 1919 that the weaker army in a conflict had to combine the use of fortified zones fixing the enemy with the manoeuvres of the field forces in order not to be enticed into an early decisive battle. Given her limited military power, Spain had to set up fortified zones along her borders (after the French model) to channel enemy offensives, and organize her army in small, very mobile, strategic units (not larger than a division).[77]

These points were in line with the views set forth a few years later by the working group on the reform of the field service regulations. The group reckoned that Spain, unless she went to war beside powerful allies, could only fight to defend her own territory. Such a defence would be based on Spain's mountainous land border. Given the features of the ground, which made the maintenance of extended fortified fronts impossible, a repetition of the trenches of the Western Front was impractical; on the

[76] G. López Muñiz, III. 17.
[77] A., 'La posición del Ejército frente a las enseñanzas de la guerra mundial', MC, IV, 31 (January 1919), pp.50-1.

contrary, there was a need for a mobile army, capable of driving back the enemy advance, which would proceed from a limited number of mountain passes. Within this context, the working group's report noted that the scale of animal transport for the 1918 division was set at more than 6,000 horses and mules; such a figure was revealing, according to the working group, of the large amounts of divisional equipment and of the difficulties that the latter presented to the division's mobility.[78]

Despite this view, the official policy did not introduce major changes in the infantry division's organization during the 1920s. The 1925 regulations defined the standing division as the major tactical unit and the basis of the organization of the field forces. It was the only major unit organized in peacetime, since forces above the divisional level would be organized, in general, at the start of the conflict.[79] The 1925 regulations also followed in essence the model of 1918. The organization of the 1925 <u>división orgánica</u> was as follows:

-Two infantry brigades (two regiments each).
-Cavalry squadron (detached from an army corps cavalry regiment in wartime).
-Light field artillery brigade (a gun and a howitzer regiment).
-Sapper battalion.
-Signals group (including a wireless platoon).
-Aerostatic platoon (one balloon).
-Air observation flight.[80]

The French influence certainly weighed to some extent on the divisional organization. But the French infantry divisions, though they were strong in artillery, were leaner units due to the triangular organization of their infantry. Nonetheless, the French non-motorized infantry division of 1929-1930 was not very supple

[78] Doctrina Táctica. Informe del Cor de EM Jefe de la 2ª [sic] Sección que llevará a la Ponencia designada por la Junta de Jefes del Centro, n.d., pp. iv-vii, AGMS 2/8/535.
[79] RGU 1925, article 94.
[80] <u>Ibid</u>., article 95.

and not very mobile.[81] Therefore, the Spanish 1925 division, a heavier unit with a dozen infantry battalions and six artillery grupos (battalions), was even less adequate for manoeuvre warfare. Thus there was a paradoxical situation. The Spanish military, which disliked doctrines envisaging continuous fronts to be overcome through fire power-based procedures, kept a divisional organization which fitted better with that kind of warfare.

The present writer's research has not found evidence on the reasons for keeping the binary organization, but an official source suggests that those responsible for developing new military doctrine disliked the idea of cutting the infantry strength within the division.[82] Perhaps another reason could be a desire to provide the division with strong reserves of its own.[83]

b) A Spanish organizational innovation: the composite brigade.

The reforms of Azaña, so far-reaching in other matters, left the divisional organization of 1925 intact. This reflected the fact that Azaña's interest in military policy lay essentially in the political aspects, not the professional ones.[84] But the lack of reforms in 1931 does not mean that there was uncritical acceptance of the current model of division. The organization of the infantry division after the 1925 regulations was reckoned unsuitable for the Spanish theatres of operations by a number of essayists, who stood for more flexible models of major unit. There were two lines of thinking on this issue.

One of these lines advocated the introduction of the triangular division. Major Martínez de Campos proposed divisions of nine

[81] Doughty, p. 104.
[82] Doctrina Táctica. Informe del Cor de EM Jefe de la 2ª [sic] Sección que llevará a la Ponencia designada por la Junta de Jefes del Centro, n.d., p. xxiii, AGMS 2/8/535.
[83] Pardo, 'La doctrina militar española' (February 1936), p. 59.
[84] CLE 1931, No. 282. See also Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 300-8.

infantry battalions and a proportionate scale of artillery; these smaller divisions would give the army corps more operational flexibility.[85] But the triangular division had other advantages, besides the operational ones. Cebreiros expressed his amazement because Azaña, who liked imitating French military models, had not substituted the triangular division for the Spanish binary organization. He argued that a triangular organization of the infantry, based on smaller peacetime battalions (three active companies), would allow Spain to keep sixteen standing divisions (432 companies or 144 battalions) with only a slight increase on the actual strength of the eight divisions and the mountain troops (360 companies making 64 line and 8 mountain battalions) envisaged by Azaña's reform. Thus it would not have been necessary to bring about the premature retirement of many infantry officers. For Cebreiros, all this was explained by Azaña's desire to expel politically unreliable personnel.[86]

Most essayists, however, advocated the so-called 'composite brigade' (brigada mixta) as the basic major unit of the Spanish army. The composite brigade bore some resemblance to the German army's contemporary concept of kampfgruppen. The kampfgruppe was a combined arms task force organized within the division in order to carry out a specific mission. The kampfgruppen were the organizational expression of the German doctrine, which imbued commanders at all levels with the need for de-centralization and initiative on the battlefield. This also meant that the manoeuvre forces should be accompanied by their own support artillery, which would be able to attend immediately to the infantry's calls.[87] The Spanish composite brigade provided full combat support to a group

[85] Carlos Martínez de Campos, 'Reflexiones practicables sobre asuntos artilleros', MA, LXXXIV, 2 (July-December 1929), pp. 223-4.
[86] Cebreiros, pp. 43-7.
[87] López Muñiz, Procedimientos tácticos, p. 58; Doughty, pp. 105, 109-10.

of infantry battalions (the manoeuvre force) as well; the difference lay in the fact that support and manoeuvre troops were grouped in a standing unit, whereas the kampfgruppen were formed ad hoc with divisional assets.

In the same year that the regulations for the employment of major units were published (1925), Lieutenant-colonel Rodríguez Carril, of the artillery corps, wrote on the disadvantages of keeping single-arm brigades within the division. The infantry brigades introduced a rather unnecessary partition of the divisional front, which complicated the liaison between artillery and infantry, while the artillery brigade fostered in this arm a sense of separation to the detriment of the infantry's needs. The solution was to create self-sufficient composite brigades as divisional combined arms sub-units.[88]

A staff corps officer, Lieutenant-colonel Noreña, pointed out in 1933 that the composite brigade gave a greater flexibility to the binary division. This was very useful in a country like Spain, whose rugged territory was unfavourable for the movement of large major units; thus the smaller ones should keep a certain capacity to operate with autonomy. The composite brigade also made training in liaison and cooperation between arms easier. Finally, the composite brigade allowed the division to assume the functions of the army corps as an operational manoeuvre unit (capable of undertaking actions of some amplitude in time and space with homogeneous units), an arrangement which fitted better with the conditions of the Spanish army.[89]

[88] Vicente Rodríguez Carril, 'Empleo táctico de la Artillería Divisionaria', MA, LXXX, 2 (July-December 1925), pp. 255-6.
[89] Carlos Noreña, 'Nuestra División como unidad de maniobra', Revista de Estudios Militares (hereafter REM), II, 1 (January-June 1933), pp. 331-4. Noreña (1889-1936) had studied in the French war college; unassigned when the war broke out, the government ordered him to rejoin the service; he refused to obey and professed his moral support for the rebel cause, though he had not

According to Ramón Salas Larrazábal (who sadly does not mention his source), one of the army's general inspectorates proposed the theoretical organization for a composite brigade in 1934. It had two infantry regiments, a artillery regiment, a group of cavalry squadrons, a group of engineers, a signals company, and service units; the brigade's strength was about 12,500 troops.[90] If compared with the contemporary models outside Spain, this unit can be classified rather as a light division.[91]

On the other hand, the concept of the composite brigade was not alien to the Spanish army's military experience. Major Martínez de Campos, in a lecture at the staff college in May 1933, remarked that the composite brigade was no more than the formal organization of the traditional combined arms column; this had become the main operational unit of the Spanish army during its recent campaigns, which saw at their start the dismemberment of larger and heavier units, such as the standing divisions.[92]

Actually the Spanish army created the first composite brigade (under the form of a specialist unit) with the reorganization of 1931. A decree of 25 May 1931 included the organization of two brand new mountain infantry brigades. Every brigade was made up of two half brigades (two mountain infantry battalions each), a mountain artillery regiment (two howitzer battalions), a sapper

been involved in the conspiracy; he was court-martialed and shot despite the French government's pleas for mercy; after the war, his name would be permanently at the top of the list of lieutenant-colonels of the staff corps.

[90] Ramón Salas Larrazábal, Historia del Ejército Popular de la República, 4 vol. (Madrid, 1973), I. 556-7 n 36.

[91] Actually the Italian infantry division on the eve of the Second World War was reduced to two infantry regiments as well; however this smaller size did not bring any improvement in practice: G. López Muñiz, V. 715-7.

[92] Carlos Martínez de Campos, El problema orgánico de las grandes unidades desde el punto de vista táctico-terrestre (Madrid, 1933), p. 10. Other articles standing for the composite brigade: Secundino Serrano, 'La Brigada, unidad de combinación de acciones de Infantería y Artillería', REM, II, 2 (July-December 1933), pp. 97-109; José Luis Soraluce, 'La maniobra en las distintas unidades de la División', REM, II, 2 (July-December 1933), pp. 191-6; José García Colomo, 'Las Brigadas con capacidad de combate autónomo', REM, II, 2 (July-December 1933), pp. 259-69.

company and a signals group.[93]

The idea that major units smaller than the division were suitable for many of the foreseeable theatres of operations in Spanish territory gained strength by the mid-1930s, and was embodied in the expansion of outfits for mountain warfare. Under Gil Robles' term of office as war minister, a new composite mountain brigade was created in September 1935; the brigade included two infantry half brigades (two battalions each), at least one mountain artillery group, and a composite sapper and signals company.[94] At the same time, two of the standing divisions were to be fully transformed into mountain units (so it seems logical that their brigades became composite brigades); another two divisions would turn one of their infantry brigades, one howitzer battalion and a corresponding slice of service troops into mountain units.[95]

It is clear, after the evidence shown above, that the Spanish army was shaping by the mid-1930s a force structure in which new self-contained major units smaller than the divisiones orgánicas loomed large. If the reorganizations of 1935 had been implemented, almost half of the standing infantry brigades would have been based on the composite model by the late 1930s. Such a development went against the 1925 regulations, which did not contemplate combined arms tactics below the divisional level. Actually they stated that the divisional artillery commander was also the commanding officer of the division's artillery units.[96] This was at odds with the organization of composite brigades, which

[93] CLE 1931, No. 282.
[94] The first official reference to the brigade in June 1935 mentioned a single artillery battalion, while the official announcement of creation spoke of an artillery regiment: DOMG, 30 June 1935 and 27 September 1935.
[95] Ibid., 27 September 1935.
[96] RGU 1925, article 25.

required de-centralizing the command of divisional artillery in order to allow the brigades to operate with a degree of independence.

The conclusion is that there was a gap between the official doctrine and a strong current of professional thinking which envisaged Spain's future conflicts in terms of mobile warfare. The former was more suitable for methodical operations along fortified fronts and for armies in which the division was the smallest standing combined arms unit. The latter encouraged the organization of self-contained units below the divisional level because they fitted better with the Spanish army's operational experience and the theatres of operations in Spanish territory.

Overall, there was an uneasy relationship at this period between the tradition of imitation of the French model, which seems to have weighed much on official decision-making circles, and the thinking of a part (at least) of the military. Thus a stream of essayists urged the army to develop a military doctrine and organization of its own, better adapted to the features of the Spanish territory, while the official spheres displayed a penchant for regulations copied from the French experiences on the Western Front.

7.- THE SPANISH MILITARY AND MECHANIZATION, 1918-1936.

This chapter sums up and discusses the attitudes of the Spanish military towards armour and mechanized warfare from the end of the First World War to the eve of the Spanish Civil War. After an account of the beginnings of the armoured force, this chapter will assess the weight of foreign doctrines (especially those of British theorists), and the organizational evolution of the Spanish armour and the doctrinal debate on mechanization in the decade before the Civil War.[1]

Before going on, it may be useful to point out the difference between two terms - motorization and mechanization - which, though often used indistinctly by the contemporary literature, had a different meaning. Motorization was defined as the substitution of the combustion engine for muscular effort in transport. Mechanization was the use of armoured vehicles (wheeled or tracked) for carrying troops and for fighting on the battlefield, to the detriment of foot and mounted units; moreover, mechanized units used motorization for their logistics and long range movements. Therefore, mechanization implied motorization, but motorization did not necessarily lead to mechanization.[2]

1. Mechanization in the Spanish army until 1926.

a) The beginnings of Spanish armour, 1909-1922.

The first tanks went into action in 1916, but before the First World War some authors had already speculated about the idea of a self-propelled armoured fighting device and the form this vehicle

[1] There is an extended literature dealing with mechanization and armoured warfare, and just a couple of titles will be mentioned here: Charles Messenger, The Art of Blitzkrieg (London, 1976), and John Wheldon, Machine Age Armies (London, 1968).
[2] Enrique García Albors, Motorización y mecanización del Ejército (Toledo, 1935), pp. 7-8. García Albors was appointed in the 2nd Infantry Tank Regiment in 1931-1934.

could adopt.[3] The Spanish military can display a contribution to this pioneering thinking about armoured vehicles. Around 1912 a Lieutenant-colonel Emilio Gil Alvaro thought up an armoured device moving on helicoidal rollers, which he called 'war chariot'. His design did not arouse interest and only a passing reference in a professional journal a few years later rescued it from oblivion.[4] Nonetheless, about the same time, the Spanish army recognized the convenience of using armoured vehicles for some kinds of operations. The General Staff, in its conclusions about the Melilla campaign, recommended transforming motor vehicles for movement in hostile zones by equipping them with light armour and one machine gun.[5]

This writer's research has not found any evidence about how the Spanish army made the decision to acquire tanks. It is certain that such a decision was made before the end of the First World War, because the General Staff communicated to the War Ministry undersecretary on 22 October 1918 that the military attaché in Paris, Colonel García Benítez, had reported that the French government would give permission for handing over one Renault tank.[6] A few days later the head of the Artillery Section, General Sanz, informed Foreign Minister Dato that the Spanish ambassador in Paris must ask the French government for such permission; Sanz pointed out that King Alfonso XIII had stressed the urgency of carrying out the operation.[7]

The French government gave its permission in early January

[3] For example, see T.H.E. Travers, 'Future Warfare: H.G. Wells and British Military Theory, 1895-1916', in Brian Bond and Ian Roy (eds.), War and Society. A Yearbook of Military History (London, 1975), pp. 72-4.
[4] Ricardo Caballé, 'El carro de asalto ó tanque', MI, VII, 83 (December 1918), p. 465.
[5] Estado Mayor Central, Enseñanzas del Rif, p. 196.
[6] Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, Sexta Sección to Subsecretaría del Mº de la Guerra, 22 October 1918, AGMS 2/1/67.
[7] Ministerio de la Guerra, Sección de Artillería to Ministro de Estado, 28 October 1918, AGMS 2/1/67.

1919.[8] The Spanish cabinet approved the purchase of the Renault tank in March 1919. The tank was delivered in May 1919, but there was a bureaucratic muddle which delayed the payment (the French embassy in Spain still demanded it in May 1923).[9]

The Renault tank underwent trials on the training grounds of Carabanchel in late June 1919. Its performance was reckoned satisfactory by the Spanish army's ordnance experiences commission, which recommended starting dealings to purchase ten tanks.[10] A decree authorized the War Ministry to carry out the purchase on 13 August 1919.[11]

While it tried to get French tanks, the Spanish army also looked for other suppliers. The military attaché in London, Colonel Rich, reported in early October 1919 that his inquiry (ordered by the General Staff) about the British authorities' reaction to a request to acquire a light tank had not provided positive results. Nonetheless, Rich met with Winston Churchill (then British war minister) during a meal and the subject of tanks emerged during their conversation. Rich told him about the negative answer to his inquiry. Churchill said that he was ready to meet again with Rich and give support if the Spanish government retained its interest in British tanks.[12]

However, the Spanish efforts suffered a setback when Colonel García Benítez reported in November 1919 that the Allies had

[8] Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, Sexta Sección to Subsecretaría del Mº de la Guerra, 15 January 1919, AGMS 2/1/67.
[9] Sección de Artillería, 2º Negociado, Nota para el Señor General, n.d., AGMS 2/1/67; [State Minister] Alba to [War Minister] Alcalá Zamora, 23 February 1923, AGMS 2/1/67; M. Barrail [French financial attaché in Madrid] to General Hernando [head of the Artillery Section], 9 May 1923, AGMS 2/1/67.
[10] Ministerio de la Guerra, Artillería, Comisión de experiencias, proyectos y comprobación del material de Guerra, Adquisición de 8 carros-ametralladora tipo Renault y dos carros-cañón de 37, 2 July 1919, AGMS 2/1/67.
[11] DOMG, 14 August 1919.
[12] Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, Sexta Sección to Subsecretaría, 7 November 1919, AGMS 2/1/67.

decided not to supply some kinds of ordnance, such as tanks.[13] The Spanish army did not give up and, in late November 1919, the War Ministry ordered Lieutenant-colonel Pérez Vidal, military attaché in Washington, to gather information in order to purchase tanks and artillery tractors made in America. Pérez Vidal contacted the American army and local manufacturers, but he had no success in his efforts.[14]

Despite the obstacles, the Spanish army carried on looking for a supplier of armour, and its efforts were finally rewarded when it could at last buy tanks in France. A contract to purchase six Schneider tanks (armed with one 75 mm gun) was signed on 12 September 1921, and was followed two days later by another contract concerning eleven Renault tanks. Both purchases were approved by the Spanish cabinet on 16 September 1921.[15]

It was not clear for the Spanish military which corps armour should be assigned to. Given the Spanish army's background of corporate rivalries, it is not surprising that armour became another area of professional responsibility to fight for. For instance, Major Jevenois (an artilleryman) stated in 1921 that tanks were essentially accompanying artillery for the assault and, therefore, the artillery corps should take charge of their organization (as had been the case in France).[16]

[13] Ministerio de la Guerra, Subsecretaría, 5° Negociado to Sección de Artillería, 25 November 1919, AGMS 2/1/67.
[14] Embajada de España en Washington, Agregado Militar to General Jefe de la Sección de Artillería, 29 December 1919, AGMS 2/1/39; Ministerio de Estado to Ministerio de la Guerra, 8 January 1920, AGMS 2/1/39.
[15] The documents about these purchases are filed in AGMS 2/1/67. Technical data about both tanks was as follows:

Model	Weight (tonnes)	Speed (kmph)	Armament	Max. armour (mm)	Crew
Renault FT-17	6,7	7,7	1 37 mm gun or 1 machine gun	16	2
Schneider M-16	13,5	6,7	1 75 mm gun and 2 machine guns	11,4	7

Source: Javier de Mazarrasa, Los carros de combate en España (Madrid, 1977), pp. 25-9.
[16] Pedro Jevenois, 'Artillería de acompañamiento. Nuevos materiales que la integran', MA,

A paper of the General Staff of early 1922 provides some information about this issue.[17] The paper assessed the idea of creating a separate tank service, which would get specialist personnel seconded from the corps of the army (this was the arrangement for the military air service). The artillery would provide gunners, machine gunners would come from the infantry, and the tanks would be driven by engineer corps' personnel. The command of armoured units would be performed by officers of these branches of the army and the staff corps. However, the paper gave an unfavourable opinion about this arrangement. The heavier tanks, armed with cannon, based much of their performance on fire power. Although the fire direction of these tanks' main armament was simple, it was logical that artillery officers were the most proficient for this task. In turn, the lighter tanks, which had to cooperate closely with the infantry, would be much better commanded by officers of this arm, since they had the best knowledge of infantry tactics. Moreover, the machine gun had become a weapon of common use for all arms, and all the corps had personnel qualified to become tank drivers.

Therefore, the paper discarded the grouping of all the armour under a single service in order to avoid the troubles of mixing personnel from different corps. It stood instead for sharing the responsibilities for tanks depending on the latter's characteristics and tactical missions. The heavy or breakthrough (ruptura) tanks should be under the command of the artillery corps, whereas the light tanks should be assigned to the infantry. Nonetheless, such a division of the tank force also made little sense. The paper stated that the light tanks' mission was the

LXXVI, 1 (January-June 1921), pp. 104-5, 245.

[17] Estado Mayor Central, 1ª Sección, Carros de asalto. Informe en expediente sobre el empleo de dichas armas de combate en nuestro ejército, 2 February 1922, AGMS 2/1/67.

protection of the infantry from enemy fire during the assault, and the destruction of the passive and active means of resistance. The heavy tanks opened the way for the attacking forces through all kinds of ground, and were to destroy the strongest points of enemy resistance. This formulation of missions does not articulate any significant difference between the missions for both types of tanks. The only difference which can be deduced after reading the paper lies in each tank's main armament (the infantry tank was armed with machine guns or a small calibre gun, whereas the breakthrough tank carried a more powerful gun - up to 75mm calibre).

The solution put forward by the General Staff's paper was the one adopted: the Spanish armour was divided into infantry and artillery tanks. It would have been more rational to put the tanks, given their similar missions in practice, under a single authority (either a new corps or one of the traditional ones) which would provide common training in tank weapons and mechanical matters. But corporate jealousies still weighed much in the early 1920s, and a plausible explanation is that, for instance, artillery officers found it unpleasant to give up some of their technical responsibilities, to leave their corps for a new one, or even to be integrated temporarily with personnel of other corps in a same unit :. This last case had actually worked for Spanish military aviation, but then the aircraft was not seen as a threat to the corporate status of any of the branches of the army.

b) <u>Some early reactions</u>.

For some sections of the Spanish military the First World War seemed to stress the need, in future conflicts, for a mobile arm cooperating with motorized and cyclist infantry, artillery and

sappers.[18] The question was the nature of this mobile arm: should machines or horseflesh be its embodiment?

Those who stood for the horse did not lack proofs endorsing the value of cavalry in contemporary warfare. Even on the Western Front, the British cavalry could show their mettle after the return of mobile warfare operations in 1918.[19] The fact that the victors of 1918 used large numbers of tanks seemed not to be significant for those who were sceptical about armoured forces. Two officers attending a course at the French Ecole Superieure de Guerre, Majors Seguí and Martín, reached the conclusion that the tank was a very limited weapon whose usefulness for the Spanish army was almost nil.[20]

Others displayed a more positive - if conventional - attitude in relation to armour. The 1923 edition of a textbook widely used in the military academies defined tanks as armoured automobile machine guns or cannon which replaced artillery to suppress resistance after breaking into the enemy's positions; moreover, they could reduce or eliminate the need for a prolonged artillery preparation, thus favouring surprise. The text emphasized that tanks were an infantry weapon and as such had to be employed according to infantry tactics.[21]

Major Jevenois saw no usefulness in tanks armed with machine guns only, since they had to be capable of destroying machine gun pillboxes and bunkers. According to Jevenois, light machine gun teams (which were more mobile on broken ground) or cavalry machine

[18] A., 'Orientaciones de la Caballería', MC, IV, 38 (August 1919), pp.91-100.
[19] John Singleton, 'Britain's Military Use of Horses 1914-1918', Past and Present, No. 139 (May 1993), p. 192.
[20] Juan Seguí and José Martín Prat, 'Evolución del armamento de la infantería francesa durante la gran guerra', LGP VI, 4 (April 1921), p. 253.
[21] J[osé] Villalba, Táctica de las tres Armas (Aviación y carros de asalto), 3 vol. (Toledo, 1923), I. 485-92.

gun sections carried on motorbikes with sidecar (which were faster on open, level ground) could substitute for the machine gun tank.[22]

It is noteworthy that a way to scorn the tank (as happened to early machine guns) was to deem it unsuitable for mobile war (the war par excellence) and more adequate for colonial operations only.[23] As late as 1927, a regular contributor to the cavalry journal still wrote: 'It is possible that they [tanks] are useful sometimes, mainly in colonial wars, but battering rams and catapults can be useful as well and nobody thinks of unearthing these artefacts out of the pantheon in which they deservedly rest.'[24]

c) First blood: Morocco, 1922-1926.

The Renault and Schneider tanks were certainly bought for training purposes, since they were assigned to the Central Firing School (Madrid). But the War Ministry later changed its mind and decided to dispatch the newly born armoured force to the Spanish protectorate in Morocco in early 1922. On 6 March 1922, the War Ministry ordered the urgent dispatch of five Renault tanks from the ECT to Melilla, in addition to the six Renaults sent the day before.[25]

The armour sent to Morocco was not an impressive force.[26] The

[22] Jevenois, 'Artillería de acompañamiento...', pp. 104-5.
[23] A., 'Lo ocasional y lo permanente...', p. 102; 'Los carros de asalto', MC, V, 43 (January 1920), pp. 3-12; and 'Los carros de asalto', MC, V, 44 (February 1920), pp. 91-9.
[24] 'Posible es que alguna vez sean útiles, principalmente en guerras coloniales, pero también pueden serlo los arietes, catapultas... sin que a nadie se le ocurra desenterrar esos artefactos del panteón en que merecidamente reposan.' A., 'La guerra en el porvenir', MC, XII, 130 (April 1927), p. 226.
[25] Ministerio de la Guerra to Capitán General [Madrid], 6 March 1922, AGMS 2/1/67.
[26] Brief accounts of their intervention can be found in Francisco Fernández Mateos, Carros de combate y vehículos acorazados en la historia de España (Madrid, 1986), pp. 9-12, 17; Francisco Marín, 'Los carros de asalto españoles en la campaña de Marruecos', Defensa, XIII, 144 (April 1990), pp. 62-7; and Francisco Marín, 'La batería de carros de asalto de artillería (España, 1922)', Defensa, XIV, 156 (April 1991), pp. 60-4.

Spanish army fielded an infantry tank unit with eleven Renault FT-17s (Spain later purchased another six Renaults to replace lost tanks), and a battery of artillery tanks with six Schneider CA-1s. An article strongly recommending the use of armour in Morocco and published in the infantry journal a couple of months before the arrival of the tanks is noteworthy. Its author saw the tank as an impregnable mobile pillbox, capable of moving forward even through somewhat broken ground and overcoming points of concentrated resistance. The tanks would demoralize the Moors for sure.[27] However, the reality was to dispel such hopes about the effectiveness of the tank in Morocco.

The initial performance of the Spanish tanks was rather disappointing: in their first action two Renault tanks had to be abandoned because of damage by enemy fire and mechanical breakdowns. The lessons of the first combats were used by the Spanish army to develop a more careful use of its armour, whose performance was generally effective - though unspectacular - during the rest of the campaign. Actually this improvement encouraged the Spanish command to conceive a comparatively bold use of tanks during the landings in the bay of Alhucemas (September 1925). The infantry tank unit, embarked on modified landing craft, would precede the assault troops in the first wave. However, tide conditions prevented the armour from landing on the first day.[28]

The colonial experience of armour does not seem to have been an outstanding success. Captain Guarner, who was to serve in the infantry tank unit for several months in 1925-1926, enumerated the mistakes made in the early period: using tanks in isolation as

[27] Luis Berenguer, 'Facetas de la campaña marroquí', MI, IX, 120 (January 1920), pp. 76-7.
[28] Francisco Castrillo Mazeres, La aportación de España al arte militar (Madrid, 1959), p. 52; Marín, 'Carros de asalto españoles...', p. 64.

mobile blockhouses, too long periods in action (exceeding their nine hours' autonomy), inadequate reconnaissance, and losing contact with the infantry during the advance. Lack of experience doubtless contributed to these faults, which, on the other hand, were quite similar to those made by the French in their Moroccan protectorate, which points to an unsuitable doctrine.[29] The French army's experience in the Riff strengthened its tendency to use armour piecemeal. During the heyday of the campaign against Abd el-Krim the French used two tank battalions which were divided into independent companies and platoons to operate with the operations columns.[30]

Therefore, it is not surprising that an essayist concluded that the Moroccan experience proved the need for a greater subordination of tanks to infantry, by using them as fire support for the lines of riflemen and under the cover of the latter.[31] An analyst of the campaign, Major Díaz de Villegas, also pointed out that, besides the tactical limitations, the poor road network in Morocco reduced the tank's strategic readiness; and, moreover, armoured trucks armed with machine guns were more effective for road patrol missions than tanks. Díaz de Villegas was reassured in his judgements by the similar views of French military essayists.[32]

However, Guarner thought that armour could be employed in colonial warfare in more imaginative ways: it could be used for

[29] Vicente Guarner, 'Carros de combate', MI, XIII, 145 (February 1924), p. 101; Fernández Mateos, p. 17. Guarner (1894-1981) was commissioned in the infantry and a staff diplomate; he served several months in the infantry tank unit of Morocco (1925-1926) and taught at the Infantry Academy; Guarner left the service in early 1936 and became senior police official in the Catalonian regional government; during the Civil War, he held senior staff appointments in the republican army on the Catalonian-Aragonese front.
[30] Doughty, pp. 87-8.
[31] Manuel de Pazos, 'El ejército colonial. Lo que dicta la experiencia', MI, XII, 142 (November 1923), p. 326.
[32] José Díaz de Villegas, Lecciones de la experiencia. (Enseñanzas de las campañas de Marruecos) (Toledo, 1930), pp. 72-4.

assaults even in rough ground (if the enemy had no anti-tank weapons), long-range offensive reconnaissance (with supporting infantry), and line of communication protection (though it had to be used in numbers for this role).[33] An essayist of the 1930s, Lieutenant García Albors, thought that irregular campaigns such as the last Spanish operations in Morocco (1926-1927) proved the benefits of increasing the level of motorization in the army. This required the building of roads and tracks, a costly task sometimes, but they made supply easier and allowed continual, methodical operations.[34]

2. **The influence of foreign thinking on mechanization.**

Beside its own experience in Morocco, foreign military thinking and experiences were another source of doctrine on mechanization for the Spanish army. Part of the knowledge came through the professional journals, of which the most interesting is La Guerra y su preparación. The articles in this journal on foreign experiences displayed at best a sceptical view on the future of mechanization.[35]

For instance, in an article about the manoeuvres of the British army in 1925, the editorial staff of La Guerra y su preparación acknowledged the technical improvement of the new Vickers tanks over those used in the First World War; therefore their main role could not be to support infantry, since they would lose the advantage of their greater mobility. The journal's staff deduced that they were to perform a reserve role first, and then they were to advance quickly to attack points of resistance or support mobile field forces.[36] This article reveals signs of the 'weapon

[33] Guarner, 'Carros de combate', pp. 101-2.
[34] García Albors, Motorización, pp. 117-24.
[35] Alpert, Reforma militar, pp. 72-4.
[36] 'Las maniobras del Ejército británico', LGP, X, 4 (April 1926), pp. 366.

of opportunity' concept. Despite their technical improvement, which made easier their integration in manoeuvre warfare, tanks were not to intervene until a culminating point of fighting was reached by the traditional arms. Therefore this hints that the journal's editorial staff did not consider armour an integral part of the mobile field forces yet, though mobility was recognized as a major feature of the new tanks.

Then there were the writings of the foreign essayists, though knowledge of them was limited. The British theorists Swinton, Fuller, Liddell Hart, Croft and Collins, and the American Edmunds, were deemed the leading supporters of mechanization, whereas the best known representatives of motorization were Generals Camon and Allehaut of the French army. The so-called motorization school was less radical and nearer to the thinking prevailing in most armies, which broadly followed the lessons deduced from operations on the Western Front during the First World War. But both schools agreed that future warfare would see motor mobile units able to strike precise, disabling blows which would end conflicts in the shortest time.[37]

a) <u>British thinking</u>.

Knowledge of British mechanization pioneers was very limited. Only J. F. C. Fuller raised enough interest to prompt the translation of some of his works (<u>Training Soldiers for War</u>, <u>On Future Warfare</u>, and <u>Lectures on FSR III</u>) before 1936.[38] In general, their views were reckoned too radical. For example, Captain Ruíz de Toledo (who designed the first Spanish tank) was particularly sceptical about Fuller's theories of armoured forces forming 'land fleets'. These modified too radically the

[37] García Albors, <u>Motorización</u>, pp. 14-5.
[38] Alpert, <u>Reforma militar</u>, pp. 71-2.

traditional features of battle consolidated during the First World War. According to Ruíz de Toledo, Fuller underrated the value of ground, which channels movement and provides protection and vantage points to observe and attack the enemy. The conquest and defence of these positions was what made the difference between sea and land warfare; armoured forces could conquer ground but were unable to hold it. Nonetheless, Ruíz de Toledo was no retrogressive thinker: on the contrary, he thought that infantry had to become as mobile as tanks to reach full effectiveness.[39]

Even Lieutenant García Albors, who accepted a gradual increase of the mechanical factor in battle, warned against too radical mechanization because of the dangers of overconfidence in machines, which harmed morale by making it too dependent on the quality and/or quantity of ordnance. In other words, the theorists of mechanization were subject to the charge of leaving deliberately aside the human, morale-related factors.[40]

Only one essayist, a Major Montojo, displayed a relative sympathy towards the British theorists before 1936; his book's bibliography included the works of Fuller (On Future Warfare) and Liddell Hart (The Remaking of Modern Armies). Montojo argued that the enthusiasts of traditional cavalry, in stressing the few missions which seemed to be the raison d'être of the contemporary regiments on horseback, actually underlined the latter's limited use in modern warfare. The problem was that cavalry officers thought as horsemen, instead of thinking of the mission of cavalry as the mobile fighting arm. If cavalrymen did the latter, they would seek to implement mechanization at any cost. For tanks were, according to Montojo, the modern version of heavy cavalry, to be

[39] Carlos Ruíz de Toledo, 'El problema del carro de combate', MA, LXXXIV, 1 (July-December 1929), pp. 182-4, 197.
[40] García Albors, Motorización, pp. 169-71.

used en masse against weak points and lines of communication of the enemy, while the latter was pinned by infantry and artillery action.[41]

Fuller's and Liddell Hart's ideas on the role of infantry in mechanized warfare were criticised by Lieutenant García Albors, who was an infantryman. Fuller envisaged 'heavy' infantry on armoured carriers advancing with the tanks, and 'light' infantry for security and garrison duties and fighting in rough ground; Liddell Hart reduced the infantry to a defensive role or offensive skirmishing missions. According to García Albors, these theories led to an overspecialization, which deprived the infantry of their ability to fight whatever the ground and the situation. He accepted that the infantrymen had to be equipped with means which reduced their impedimenta and increased their mobility, but without introducing new categories. García Albors reckoned light tracked armoured vehicles useful for carrying infantry support weapons on the battlefield.[42]

To be fair with contemporary critics, and to see that they were not led by sheer conservatism, it is necessary to bear in mind that the doctrine of mechanization could not be totally implemented in Spain at that time. Even if the financial and industrial resources had been available, a mechanization of the Spanish army on a large scale would have been unlikely because of the geographical factor. J.F.C. Fuller himself recognized this in his prologue to the Spanish edition of Lectures on FSR III:

> If I had written this book for the Spanish army, I would have done it in a different way, because Spain's topography is different from that which we usually found in the British empire. From a topographical point of view, Spain is an unique country, divided, as it is, by

[41] Vicente Montojo, Ejército moderno (Madrid, 1930), pp. 148-50.
[42] Enrique García Albors, Carros de Combate, 3 vol. (Toledo, 1932-1933), III. 560; García Albors, Motorización, pp. 185-6.

> a series of almost parallel mountain chains from west to east. In my view, such a country is ideal to combine the methods of muscular and mechanized warfare; for the older weapons can occupy the mountains, while the newer ones can go over the plains.[43]

Only published sources until 1936 have been surveyed for this research on the issue of foreign influence. However, a later source makes very plausible that Fuller's ideas raised the interest of Vicente Rojo (an infantry officer and co-publisher of the Spanish edition of Lectures on FSR III), who became the republican army's chief of general staff in the Civil War. In late May 1938 the republican army undertook an offensive on the Catalonian front. Since he was the operational mastermind in the republican general staff, Rojo was almost surely in charge of the offensive's planning.[44] According to the plan, an army corps should exploit the initial breakthrough on motor transport. This army corps' commander, Lieutenant-colonel Tagüeña, wrote in his memoirs that he and his army corps' senior officers were given before the operation copies of one of Fuller's works in order to get the essentials of that kind of warfare.[45] Tagüeña does not mention the title of the book, but given Rojo's involvement in the

[43] 'Si hubiese escrito este libro para el Ejército español, le hubiera escrito de diferente manera, porque la topografía de España es diferente de la que generalmente encontramos en el Imperio británico. Desde el punto de vista topográfico, España es un país único, compartimentado, como se encuentra, de oeste a este por una serie de cadenas montañosas casi paralelas. Semejante país, a mi juicio, resulta ideal para una combinación de los procedimientos de guerra muscular y de guerra mecanizada; porque mientras las armas más antiguas pueden ocupar las montañas, las más nuevas pueden recorrer los llanos.' J.F.C. Fuller, Operaciones entre fuerzas mecanizadas. Comentarios al F.S.R. III (Toledo, 1933), p. 11.

[44] José Manuel Martínez Bande, La batalla del Ebro (Madrid, 1978), p. 28. Vicente Rojo (1894-1966) was commissioned in the infantry (1914), served in Morocco in the late 1910s, taught in the Infantry Academy in the 1920s, got the staff diploma in the early 1930s, and was a co-publisher of a successful series of professional literature (1928-1936); despite being conservative-minded, he served the republican government during the Civil War. As chief of staff in the defence of Madrid in late 1936 and chief of army general staff after May 1937, Rojo planned the main republican offensives; exiled after 1939, he taught at the Bolivian staff college from 1943 to the mid-1950s.

[45] Manuel Tagüeña Lacorte, Testimonio de dos guerras (Barcelona, 1978), p. 133. Tagüeña (1913-1971) was a reservist non-commissioned officer, a graduate in physics and mathematics and a communist militant in 1936; when the Civil War broke out, he joined the militias and had risen to divisional commander one year later; his good performance won him the command of an army corps from April 1938 to the end of the war; after a period in the Soviet army in the 1940s, Tagüeña broke with the Communist Party and, in 1955, left for Mexico, where he devoted himself to science-related studies and jobs.

preparation of the offensive, it seems very possible that this book was Lectures on FSR III. And it would be very strange that Rojo recommended such reading if he had not been fond of Fuller's ideas, at least in a partial way.

b) French thinking.

Although the research for this thesis has not found evidence about this issue, it is plausible to think that the knowledge of French thought was rather more widespread, as a part of the overall Gallic military influence on the Spanish army after 1918. Though the French had used tanks in large numbers in their successful offensives of 1918 and made some efforts to develop a doctrine of mechanized warfare in the 1920s, they failed to implement far-sighted thinking on the use of armour.[46]

Actually the French experience was used to endorse negative views on armour in the Spanish army in the early post-war years. One year after the end of the war the infantry journal mentioned as an example to follow the French policy - inspired by General Petain - of keeping tanks confined to infantry support missions, instead of paying attention to premature innovations such as General Malleterre's project to turn armour into the backbone of the infantry arm.[47]

It did no good for the progress of mechanization in the Spanish army that a part of the early 1920s' published reporting on the French army's mechanization was carried out by Majors Seguí and Martín, who were studying at the Ecole Superieure de Guerre and displayed an open dislike for armour. They reported in 1921 that

[46] Brian Bond and Martin Alexander, 'Liddell Hart and De Gaulle: The Doctrines of Limited Liability and Mobile Defense', in Peter Paret (ed.), Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age (Oxford, 1986), pp. 602-4; Wheldon, pp. 43, 48-9, 55-6.
[47] 'La Infantería y los tanques', MI, VIII, 95 (December 1919), pp. 463-6.

the tank played a very secondary role in the French military exercises.[48] Seguí and Martín even used a paper on the employment of air power in colonial warfare to show their negative views on tanks.[49] Several years later, Seguí, then a lieutenant-colonel and military attaché in France, expressed his unfavourable views again in La Guerra y su preparación after observing the French manoeuvres of July 1929, where he became reassured about the limitations suffered in using tanks. Moreover, he added that the improvement and the increased employment of anti-tank weapons were 'to make precarious the achievements made by this expensive equipment.'[50]

The French school of motorization (represented by Generals Allehaut and Camon) was less radical than the mechanization theorists, and easier for the Spanish military to accept since it was nearer to the contemporary official doctrine.[51] Even the Spanish military's conservative sections were willing to see some advantages in an increased use of motor vehicles in the army. In fact, the use of motor vehicles was seen as a way to prevent cavalry from turning into mounted infantry, since mobile infantry forces could be created through motorization - with the additional advantage of the better cost-effectiveness of the mechanical transport's.[52] Another advantage of motorization was that motor vehicles were faster, less fatiguing for the troops and less expensive in manpower than horse-drawn transport, since their maintenance was minimal when inactive (whereas horses need constant care).[53]

[48] Seguí and Martín, 'Evolución del armamento de la infantería francesa...', p. 250.
[49] Juan Seguí and José Martín Prat, 'Utilización de la aviación en las campañas coloniales', LGP, VI, 1 (January 1921), p. 36.
[50] '[H]acer precarios los resultados conseguidos por ese costoso material.' [Juan] Seguí, 'Maniobras del Ejército francés en el Campo de Mailly', LGP, XV, 1 (January 1930), p. 53.
[51] García Albors, Motorización, pp. 14-5.
[52] A., 'La doctrina francesa acerca de la Caballería', MC, V, 51 (September 1920), p. 177.
[53] García Albors, Motorización, pp. 23-30.

3. Organizational and doctrinal consolidation, 1927-1935.

a) Reorganization and attempts at development.

After the defeat of Abd el-Krim in the spring of 1926, the infantry tank unit was repatriated and attached to the Third Section of the Central Firing School, where it was used as a 'school-unit' in courses for officers. The artillery tank battery was also sent to the Central Firing School by 1930.[54]

While the small Spanish armoured force was still fighting in Morocco, the army thought of producing a tank of national manufacture. An artillery officer, Captain Ruíz de Toledo, was sent abroad to study foreign tanks in 1925. With the knowledge acquired, he designed a new model and supervised the making of the prototypes by the artillery factory in Trubia (six prototypes were made from 1926 to 1934). The official name of the model was 'fast tank', but it became generally known as 'Trubia tank'. The first prototypes were finished in the summer of 1926 and sent to the ECT (Third Section) for trials.[55]

The 4A version of the Trubia also underwent trials at the Central Firing School in 1928. According to the official records on those trials, the performance of the Trubia was highly satisfactory. It had good cross-country mobility and was fast (32 kmph on road) and well-protected (up to 15 mm armour) despite being a tank of moderate weight (9 tons); the armament it was supposed to carry (one 40 mm gun and two machine guns, or three machine guns) provided enough fire power. The conclusion was that the Trubia tanks satisfied the requirements for a modern light tank and even outmatched other contemporary foreign models in many

[54] García Albors, Carros, III. 527; Marín, 'La batería...', p. 64.
[55] García Albors, Carros, III. 527-8; Fernández Mateos, pp. 13, 21.

respects.[56]

The positive judgement of the official report mentioned above was not totally shared by Lieutenant-colonel Ureña, of the engineer corps, although this writer has been unable to find out if this officer was well grounded enough in the issue to be considered a reliable source. According to Ureña, the Trubia had a relatively high speed, good vision capacity and acceptable ability to surpass obstacles; but its armour was poor, the tracks were too fragile, and it was too bulky in relation to its performance.[57]

Whatever the Spanish military's assessment of the Trubia, the fact is that its mass production never started. Although dissatisfaction with the Trubia's performance perhaps should not be totally discarded, financial reasons probably were the main cause of this inaction. The army budgets left too small a margin for ordnance procurement and, since there were more immediate needs for basic equipment, it would have been rather odd to devote many resources to such a piece of state-of-the-art technology as the tank.[58] It must also be remembered that Spain had no major motor industry at the time, so producing a large series of tanks was possibly beyond the country's capabilities.[59]

In late November 1926 the military authorities ordered the creation of an armoured group, attached to the Third Section of the ECT. The organization of the unit was detailed on 12 January 1927. The group was formed with two companies. One of these would

[56] Negociado de estudios, proyectos, experiencias y fabricación de material de guerra, Acta nº 10, 23 May 1928, AGMS 2/1/39; Ministerio de la Guerra, Sección de Industrias y Construcciones Militares, 1er Negociado, Expediente relativo a informe sobre pruebas realizadas con el carro ligero de combate Trubia de 75 HP serie 4A, 8 June 1928, AGMS 2/1/39.
[57] Ladislao Ureña, 'Motorización, mecanización', Memorial de Ingenieros, LXXXVIII, 12 (December 1933), pp. 523-4.
[58] For instance, the Spanish soldiers were not provided with an issue steel helmet until 1935: Payne, Politics, p. 305.
[59] Fernández Mateos, p. 17.

be equipped with the existing Renaults and would have a headquarters (one signals tank), two combat platoons (five tanks each) and a supply and service platoon (four tanks). The other would receive the first Trubia tanks and would have a similar organization (excepting the service platoon, with two tanks only). The total strength was 28 tanks (13 Trubias and 15 Renaults). However, according to García Albors, the unit never materialized.[60]

b) Official doctrine on armour in the 1920s.

The early guidance for the Spanish tankmen were the ECT provisional instructions for the Renault tank company and the 1922 provisional regulations for 'assault artillery' (i.e. the artillery tanks).[61] Later there were also some short references to armour in the 1924 Doctrina and the 1925 major unit regulations.[62] However, it is necessary to mention an article of Captain Guarner, published in Memorial de Infantería in February 1924, which advanced some of the principles for the employment of tanks which were sanctioned later by the official regulations. Guarner stressed the role of the tank as an offensive weapon. Tanks had to be used massively and simultaneously (in order to saturate the enemy's defences); if they could not be deployed along all the front, they must be concentrated on the decisive point. The fighting order of tanks had to be organized in depth, thus allowing tanks in the rear ranks to suppress points of resistance which had been passed by the advanced ones, and to relieve the latter in time.[63]

[60] CLE 1926, No. 408; CLE 1927, No. 14; García Albors, Carros, III. 527-8; Marín, 'Carros de asalto españoles...', p. 67.
[61] García Albors, Carros, III. 530-1. This writer could not find any copy of the instructions mentioned.
[62] García Albors, Carros, III. 531.
[63] Guarner, 'Carros de combate', pp. 92-6.

The 1924 Doctrina, in relation to which the 1925 regulations did not offer any new development, defined tanks as weapons which were essentially offensive.[64] Besides pointing out that armour must be used massively, it also went some way to clarify the tactical roles of the infantry and artillery tanks, since it explained that the breakthrough (artillery) tanks were those which first broke into the enemy lines, followed by the infantry tanks.[65] The Doctrina asserted that the employment of tanks could only be occasional. Armour must be organized in separate units, which would detach their elements to support the infantry with the strength required for each mission; the number of armoured units recommended was one regiment (two battalions) for two standing infantry divisions.[66]

The army's first official detailed doctrine on armour was finally issued in 1928 as a supplement to the 1926 Infantry Tactical Regulations. This doctrine fixed the tank's subordinate status as an infantry weapon.[67] Therefore, all the tank personnel had to belong to the infantry corps.[68] To dispel categorically any doubt on the tank's role, the use of tanks was banned in any mission other than those in direct relation to the infantry ones.[69] It must also be remembered that the regulations were suited to the features of the Renault FT-17 tank or similar models.

The basic tank unit was the platoon. The so-called 'first echelon' (i.e. fighting) platoon had five tanks (three armed with

[64] Estado Mayor Central, Doctrina Armas y Servicios, Title I, Chapter II, article 4.
[65] Ibid., Title I, Chapter II, article 3.
[66] Ibid., Title II, Chapter II, article 4.
[67] Dirección General de Preparación de Campaña, Instrucción y empleo táctico de los carros de combate ligeros o de acompañamiento. Anexo III al Reglamento Táctico de Infantería (1928), article 1.
[68] Ibid., article 2.
[69] Ibid., article 128.

a 37 mm gun, two with a machine gun). The 'second echelon' platoon was a service unit which included another five tanks, whose role was to carry forward supplies to the tanks in the firing line and replace those which were lost because of enemy action or mechanical breakdown. Three first echelon and one second echelon platoons plus a headquarters (with one command and one signals tank) and a tank-transporter platoon formed a first echelon company. Two tank and one tank-transporter platoons formed a second echelon company. The battalion was organized in three first echelon and one second echelon companies plus a headquarters (with two command and one signals tanks); total battalion strength was 79 tanks. Two battalions formed a regiment, whose strength (after adding the regimental signals tank) was 159 tanks.[70]

The regulations recognized that the tank had features (tactical mobility, firepower, protection against light infantry weapons and shrapnel) which were suitable for offensive action. On the other hand, they also enumerated the weak points of the tanks: vulnerability to shelling; insufficient logistic (i.e. non-tactical) mobility; limited observation means; quick wearing out of crews and mechanics; a noisy motor; mechanical unreliability; and a high fuel consumption.[71]

The tactical employment of tanks had to be ruled by the following principles:

-use en masse on wide fronts, to reduce vulnerability to the enemy's artillery fire and avoid exposed flanks;

-use in depth through successive echelons;

-maintenance of a reserve;

[70] Ibid., articles 47, 66, 76, 77 and 80. This organization had already been outlined (with a lesser attention to second echelon units) in 1924: Estado Mayor Central, Doctrina Armas y Servicios, Title I, Chapter II, article 4.
[71] Dirección General de Preparación de Campaña, Instrucción y empleo de carros de combate, article 82.

-full cooperation with the infantry, whose command had to indicate the tanks' targets;

-surprise.

This last point also stated that the intervention of tanks was momentary, so they must be used in the last phase of combat (the assault); they were in great danger in case of premature deployment or if they were not withdrawn in time from the battle ground.[72] This was another display of the view of tanks as 'weapons of opportunity'. Captain Ruíz de Toledo echoed it in an article for the artillery corps journal in 1929. He stated that tanks tended to become a special arm for quick and violent interventions in the decisive moments of combat.[73]

Despite the point about a massive use of tanks, there was no idea of large tank forces under the operational control of a single commander (as was proposed by the leading British and German theorists of armoured warfare). Fragmentation, instead of concentration, was the rule. Actually, as García Albors pointed out, there was a contradiction in the Spanish doctrine on tank operations, because it recommended attacks on wide fronts (i.e. dispersal) and, at the same time, concentration of effort (that is, concentration of tanks) at the decisive point of the attack. Such a contradiction was confusing and dangerous for an army with a limited tank strength (García Albors thought that, in case of conflicting needs, concentration of effort must prevail over attacks on wide fronts).[74]

The regulations did not conceive that a tank regiment or battalion could operate concentrated under its commanding

[72] Ibid., article 86.
[73] Ruíz de Toledo, 'El problema del carro...', p. 197.
[74] Enrique García Albors, 'Ligero parangón y comentario de los Reglamentos de carros franceses y españoles', MI, XXV, 3 (March 1936), p. 101.

officer.[75] The regiment was deemed an administrative unit.[76] The battalion commanders were reduced to an advisory and liaison role near the divisional or higher headquarters.[77] As regards the tank/infantry ratio in tactical operations, the regulations reckoned that a tank platoon attached to each infantry battalion was usually enough - though the armoured component could be augmented to a company if the enemy defence was very strong.[78]

These regulations dealing with the infantry (light) tanks were virtually all the existing doctrine on armour, because, so far as this writer is aware, the artillery corps did not develop any regulations for its heavy tanks, besides the 1922 provisional ones. Nevertheless, the 1924 Doctrina outlined the organization of the artillery tanks. The basic unit was the battery, with the combat echelon (one command and four combat tanks), and the first (supply and liaison) and second (road transport) logistical echelons. Three batteries and a headquarters formed a grupo (battalion).[79]

Compared with the French regulations (which usually attached one tank company to an infantry battalion), the Spanish ones provided for smaller tank support per infantry battalion (the Spanish regulations reckoned one tank platoon per infantry battalion as the standard ratio). On the other hand, the Spanish organization gave greater autonomy to tank companies and battalions, since they had more signals tanks and tank-transporters. But this advantage was limited by the fact that signals tanks were supposed to complete the divisional signals network, instead of being used for

[75] Dirección General de Preparación de Campaña, Instrucción y empleo de carros de combate, article 122.
[76] Ibid., article 124.
[77] Ibid., article 79.
[78] Dirección General de Preparación de Campaña, Reglamento Táctico de Infantería, 2 vol. (1926), II. article 726.
[79] Estado Mayor Central, Doctrina Armas y Servicios, Title II, Chapter IV, article 3.

liaison between tank units and between these and the infantry (which seems the more logical role).[80] However, this did not seem very important because the official doctrine did not contemplate tank operations beyond the company level, for which coloured flags were reckoned enough at that time.

c) Mechanization under the Second Republic (1931-1936).

The reorganization of the Spanish army after the coming of the Second Republic also affected the armoured forces, though, according to Payne, War Minister Azaña 'had scant interest in tanks...'[81] Nevertheless, the republican government created two infantry tank regiments and a cavalry armoured car grupo (group of squadrons) on 23 June 1931; the tank regiments were based in Madrid (1st) and Saragossa (2nd) while the armoured car group was integrated into the cavalry division and located after September 1931 in Aranjuez, near Madrid.[82] Such an expansion of the armoured force did not fail to meet criticism. Cebreiros thought that two tank regiments were too much armour, when the line infantry had been reduced to the thirty two regiments of the standing divisions.[83]

The organization established in the 1928 regulations was not applied to the tank regiments set up in 1931. These were formed according to tables of organization and equipment established on 5 June 1931 (which contain no data on the armoured car group). Two first echelon and one second echelon platoons (five tanks each) formed a first echelon company; two first echelon companies formed a battalion; and each regiment included two battalions. The

[80] García Albors, Carros, III. 531-3, III. 537; and 'Ligero parangón y comentario...', p. 102.
[81] Payne, Politics, p. 274.
[82] CLE 1931 No. 384, No. 385 and No. 729. The cavalry armoured car group was not equipped until 1935, when it received the same model of armoured car (made in Spain and armed with one machine-gun) used by the police forces: Fernández Mateos, p. 16.
[83] Cebreiros, p. 61.

regiment's total tank strength (after adding one signals and command tank for every company, battalion and regimental headquarters) was 67 tanks.[84]

This establishment seems to contradict the decree of 25 May 1931 on the reorganization of the army, which stated that the organization of the basic tactical units would be in perfect agreement with the regulations.[85] There is no explanation of the new organization in the sources consulted, though this question becomes purely academic when talking about units which were armoured regiments on paper only: in practice there were just five Renault tanks available for each regiment.[86] On the other hand, since the platoon remained the basic tank unit, such a contradiction had no real tactical consequences. Perhaps the answer is related to Azaña's personnel policy. Since the war minister wanted to reduce the size of the officer corps (and there were no prospects in the near future to procure more tanks), he was probably satisfied with a reduced organization which saved a number of useless appointments.

Lieutenant García Albors thought that the 1931 organization could look after the equipment issues sufficiently well through the War Ministry's Ordnance Section and the ECT (for trials of new equipment). But he pointed out the need for an inspectorate of tank units with responsibilities for doctrine and training. As it was, the tank regiments were subordinate in these matters to the army general inspectors. García Albors proposed as a temporary remedy that training rules be given to the general inspectors or the tank units directly by the General Staff.[87]

[84] CLE 1931, No. 314.
[85] CLE 1931, No. 282.
[86] Fernández Mateos, p. 22.
[87] García Albors, Carros, III. 536.

After 1930 the Spanish army seemed to develop a greater interest in the increase of motorized transport, but with no real consequence in practice.[88] The lack of efforts to pursue a clear-cut policy of motorization - even on a small scale - led to an appalling state of affairs: in 1933 the Spanish army used a motor fleet of 2,655 vehicles of 92 different models. Moreover, the civil motor fleet would not be a great help in wartime. Lieutenant-colonel Ureña reckoned that just 20-30 per cent of requisitionable vehicles would be of any use because of the diversity of models and spare parts.[89]

Under the right-wing cabinets of the 1933-1935 period there were two attempts to increase the Spanish army's motorization, but they did not become more than projects before the outbreak of the Civil War. In late 1934, Prime Minister Lerroux thought of organizing a new motorized division. It would be an all-volunteer unit and a general reserve unit for the army, ready to operate in home territory or northern Africa. The second attempt was planned in June 1935, when it was decided to motorize one of the existing divisions, as a first step towards a gradual motorization of the army.[90]

The interest in developing a tank made in Spain did not disappear in the 1930s either, since the Trubia factory designed in 1934 a medium tank based on the Landesa commercial tractor (which gave the tank its name) and whose external shape resembled the Schneider model.[91] Another issue affecting armoured warfare was anti-tank defence. This matter was also neglected in the Spanish army. There were no regulations on the subject nor

[88] García Albors, Motorización, p. 221.
[89] Ureña, 'Motorización...', pp. 522-3.
[90] García Albors, Motorización, pp. 221-2; Mariano Aguilar Olivencia, El ejército español durante la Segunda República (claves de su actuación posterior) (Madrid, 1986), p. 406.
[91] Mazarrasa, Carros en España, p. 5.

specialized weapons. Actually the Spanish army was supposed to be equipped with an anti-tank gun designed in 1926, the Ramírez Arellano gun (named after its designer, an army officer), which was theoretically able to pierce the Renault tank's armour at 2,000 metres. A series of about a dozen guns was made in the artillery factory of Trubia, but they remained untested by 1931. These weapons were still stored in the factory when, during the leftist revolution of Asturias in October 1934, the insurgents took and used them against military forces, which included - ironically - the gun's designer.[92]

Writing by late 1935, Lieutenant García Albors offered a view about how motorization and mechanization could be tackled by the Spanish army in the near future. He considered a total motorization unfeasible, since the Spanish territory was too varied and there was not enough motor industry nor raw materials. Therefore, although it was possible to substitute motor transport for horse-drawn transport, the latter would remain important; this seemed confirmed by the trend of the General Staff to increase the proportion of mountain troops in the army's force structure.[93] Instead of creating new kinds of divisions, completing and improving the existing ones was a better policy.[94] García Albors also urged the procurement of more infantry tanks (at least the minimum number needed for training purposes). Nonetheless, mechanization in Spain should be set aside for the moment, but without neglecting its theoretical study. At best, mechanization should be initially implemented on a small scale, following contemporary orthodox thinking and discarding bold, unproven theories.[95]

[92] García Albors, Carros, III. 541-3; Cardona, p. 168.
[93] García Albors, Motorización, pp. 223-5.
[94] Ibid., pp. 225-8.
[95] Ibid., pp. 228-30.

4. Some views on mechanization, 1920-1936: for and against.

a) Restraints (i): Spain's industry and terrain.

The making of a Spanish armoured force in the 1920s and 1930s faced objective obstacles which the contemporary professional literature did not fail to highlight. One of them was the underdevelopment of the Spanish industry. In the early 1920s, Villalba's textbook pointed out Spain's lack of an industrial base solid enough to produce and maintain this kind of ordnance.[96] Major Federico Beigbeder of the engineer corps wrote in 1928 that any attempt to implement mechanization would end in failure because Spain was not an industrial country capable of affording such a luxury, not to mention the problems of getting a supply of fuel.[97]

Beigbdeder also mentioned the other major factor limiting the development of armoured forces in Spain: the ground. He stated that mechanization could certainly be discussed and supported on paper, but he also said of its supporters that they often disregarded the rugged Spanish terrain. Beigbeder was sure that if mechanized forces had to operate on the latter, their supporters' enthusiasm would turn into 'the bitterness brought by reality, which cannot be discussed.'[98]

The restraints of the ground were used as an argument to keep any armoured force created in the Spanish army small. Seguí and Martín had already recommended in 1921 to set up only one unit for occasional operations and experimental purposes.[99] Cebreiros wrote a decade later that the two tank regiments created by the

[96] Villalba, I. 485 fn 1.
[97] Federico Beigbeder, 'Los transportes militares en la guerra', LGP, XIII, 2 (August 1928), pp. 103, 116-8.
[98] '[L]a amargura que da la realidad, contra la cual no se puede discutir.' Ibid., p. 103.
[99] Seguí and Martín, 'Evolución del armamento de la infantería francesa...', p. 253.

republican government were a disproportionate force, since their employment on the rugged Spanish territory had not yet been tried.[100] However, Cebreiros contradicted himself because he had stated several pages before that the cavalry still had a prime role in Spain's large plains.[101]

b) <u>Restraints (ii): mechanization versus morale</u>.

Another source of criticism of mechanization lay in the latter's alleged unfavourable effects on morale. Seguí and Martín pointed out in 1921 that tank crews must be hand-picked. Both officers argued then that few soldiers had the highest military virtues. They had to extend these virtues to the mass of troops through their exemplary role on the battlefield. According to Seguí and Martín, heroic behaviour is most effective when it can be seen by the soldier's comrades. But how could this be achieved, Seguí and Martín asked, when the fighting men became confined within armoured shells with minimal external communication?[102]

Major Beigbeder also wrote with regret in 1928 about the 'madness' (<u>locura</u>) which had got hold of some foreign armies which pursued mechanization theories. These, according to Beigbeder, aimed to suppress the human factor in warfare. The new armies would make mechanics their god.[103]

Cebreiros, a harsh critic of Azaña's work, admitted the need not to lose track of a new military development such as tanks. But they must not be given too much importance, because these <u>cacharros</u> (pieces of junk) - as he called them - were not essential for the effectiveness of the army. On the contrary, the

[100] Cebreiros, p. 61.
[101] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 39.
[102] Seguí and Martín, 'Evolución del armamento de la infantería francesa...', p. 253.
[103] Federico Beigbeder, 'Los transportes militares...', p. 103.

essentials of the army were morale, discipline, training, and so on. Whithout them, any material improvement was of no avail.[104] Thus Cebreiros scorned the military value of armour if it was not accompanied by the army's moral values, and hinted that the latter were allegedly under threat by the 1931 reforms. General Mola quite probably shared this idea of mechanization threatening the traditional military virtues, since he saw as 'suspicious' (sospechosa) the persistent talk about mechanization and motorization.[105]

c) **Backing mechanization**.

Despite the arguments against mechanized forces discussed above, it cannot be said that the environment was totally hostile or retrogressive. Although they probably voiced the views of a minority within the officer corps, a few essayists recognized that mechanization was to bring a major transformation to warfare sooner than was expected. Nonetheless, except for García Albors, they merely expressed in vague terms their awareness of the changes brought by mechanization, but did not display thorough thinking about it.

For instance, Lieutenant-colonel Monasterio, a cavalry officer, made an outspoken acknowledgement of the future of mechanized forces. Although he refused to accept that cavalry were currently in decline, he thought wrong the idea that mechanization would never substitute for that arm. Quite the contrary, it would be very probable that technology would provide a mechanical replacement for the horse, capable of carrying out the cavalry's missions in a more effective way. Perhaps, Monasterio thought, mechanization would solve the problem of mobility in the

[104] Cebreiros, pp. 55-6.
[105] Mola, p. 1160.

offensive, thus preventing armies from engaging in trench warfare again.[106]

A retired general, Cándido Pardo, was also aware in 1934 of how mechanization was to transform warfare. In future wars, the mobility of troops would be more important than their numerical strength alone. Armies would seek to carry out their strategic manoeuvres quickly through the use of motor transport. Although the increase of fire power on the battlefield forced the adoption of more dispersed fighting orders, the offensive would not lose strength since it would use cross-country fighting vehicles invulnerable to small arms fire.[107]

Lieutenant García Albors, the most thoughtful Spanish essayist on the issue, can also be included among those standing for mechanizing the army. Nevertheless, he was not too enthusiastic in considering the feasibility of mechanization in Spain. García Albors thought that motorization was a commendable ideal which must be pursued as much as capacities and needs allowed, though he admitted that the cavalry and horse-drawn transport still had to be preserved in the army. García Albors recognized that motorization, which also needed a supporting industrial base, was expensive in its initial stage, so it had to be implemented with moderation and completed in wartime through requisition. Despite these difficulties, he thought that most units of the army could be motorized to a great extent and their needs for armoured support on the battlefield could be satisfied with an adequate number of armoured fighting vehicles.[108]

He was rather less optimistic in relation to mechanization. This

[106] J[osé] Monasterio, El momento de la Caballería (Toledo, 1930), pp. 93-4.
[107] Cándido Pardo González, El problema militar de España; su resolución más racional, económica y nacional (Madrid, 1934), p. 246.
[108] García Albors, Motorización, pp. 174, 218-9.

had to be implemented gradually and required great national economic resources. Despite its promise, mechanization could not assure the quick end of a war; an army of armoured fighting machines could not decide the result of a campaign, since the infantry would always be necessary to protect the conquered ground. Only non-mechanized units could operate in all terrain and combat situations. Therefore, total mechanization had to be limited to units carrying out specialized missions, such as raids or attacks against the enemy's lines of communication and headquarters. The mechanized forces would be comparatively small, since it was not normal that the enemy army gave up fighting simply because a major unit or headquarters had been surprised or enveloped. The clash with the enemy's main force had to be the basic aim for a field army, and raids were only supporting efforts in this endeavour.[109]

d) <u>An intermediate alternative</u>.

One question was still to be answered. If horse and motorized troops were to live together (at least for a while), how would this co-existence be organized? Would they lead separate lives or could they be grouped in composite units?

Lieutenant-colonel Juan Beigbeder (Federico's brother), who had seen manoeuvres of the German army with cavalry, concluded that the future lay in combining motor and horse, instead of opting for motor or horse, since both means complemented each other. The motor vehicle extended the range of the cavalry by easing their logistics, and armoured cars and motorized infantry units increased the fighting capacity of that arm. In turn, the horse provided greater tactical mobility.[110]

[109] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 173-4, 219-20.
[110] [Juan] Beigbeder, 'Las maniobras del Oder', <u>REM</u>, I, 2 (July-December 1932), pp. 427-8.

Major Gascueña recognized that the motorized division had more strategic mobility than the cavalry division, but this superiority was only significant in long distance marches and behind a screen of other units. When a motorized division had to provide its own protection, its speed would diminish and its mobility would also be restricted by its dependence on roads. Moreover, the logistic support of a motorized force would be more complicated. Thus Gascueña concluded that composite units combining motor and horse were superior to the fully motorized ones. At the tactical level, he took the superiority of the mounted forces for granted. However, Gascueña inadvertently undermined his arguments by writing that the cavalry would have to demand fast tracked armoured vehicles for fighting and logistic support missions.[111] If it was accepted that these vehicles were able (or would be able in the near future) to carry out tactical (i.e. fighting) missions, there was not much point in justifying the survival of major mounted units for long.

Moreover, Gascueña admitted that units on horseback were quite fragile (the horse needs a lot of care and training and wears out quickly without them) and were vulnerable to modern weapons.[112] So the cavalry had to adapt their doctrine to technical progress. However, he insisted that this evolution had to be prudent and the cavalry division must remain a composite unit due to the motor industry's actual level of development. Gascueña proposed a series of improvements for the division: the motorization of the units' transport trains, the substitution of cross-country armoured cars for the current models, the building of a fast cavalry tank able

[111] Epifanio Gascueña, La moderna división de Caballería. Sus misiones; su organización; aplicación de ésta a nuestro ejército (Toledo, 1931), pp. 23-6.
[112] During the Civil War, the nationalist army's general headquarters reminded that more attention should be paid to the care of cavalry mounts; many of them had been requisitioned and were of medium quality and poorly trained: Instrucciones para el empleo de la Caballería, 24 March 1938, Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Nacional 14/24/13.

to follow the movements of mounted units, and the increase of the artillery component.[113] Actually all this implied an increased mechanization of the division.

These arguments also reflected a trend, which started receiving notice in the Spanish professional literature after the late 1920s, in support of motorizing the cavalry (at least partially) and equipping this arm with armoured vehicles (initially armoured cars). For instance, against the argument that the armoured car limited the cavalry's mobility due to its dependence on roads, it was alleged that armies tended to fight - because of economic and geographical reasons - in areas with extended road networks. On the other hand, mobility also meant being able to advance quickly with one's own means against enemy resistance, which armoured cars could help to overcome. Moreover, armoured cars allowed a more economical use of horses.[114]

Major Gascueña stated that the cavalry division could not be engaged in prolonged attacks because of its limited fighting means. Its offensive operations had to be based on surprise and directed against the flanks, looking for short and intense clashes.[115] Under these circumstances, Gascueña pointed out the usefulness of adding some tank units to the cavalry division; the tanks, armed with field guns, would be able to follow the mounted troops. Thus the cavalry attacks - though carried out on foot - would have enough power to be really sudden, strong and impetuous.[116]

[113] Gascueña, Moderna división, pp. 26-9.
[114] Juan Camps, '¿Cuándo será un hecho la creación de las Unidades de Auto-ametralladoras en Caballería?', MC, XIII, 143 (September-November 1928), pp. 292-4.
[115] Both sides in the Civil War issued instructions stressing these points: Inspección General de Caballería, Directivas para la instrucción de las Brigadas de Caballería, Directiva nº 1, 10 July 1937, Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Republicana 55/540/2; and Instrucciones para el empleo de la Caballería, 24 March 1938, Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Nacional 14/24/13.
[116] Gascueña, Moderna división, pp. 143.

Captain Izquierdo, an infantryman who had passed the tank course, considered that the cavalry needed, occasionally at least, an increase in speed that horses could not give, but that the armoured car could give - with the advantage of a degree of protection against fire; so the armoured car was suitable for short missions to be carried out quickly, such as road reconnaissance, raids, harassing pursuit, and screening withdrawal. Izquierdo proposed the use of a modified version of the Trubia tank as a way to overcome the limitations of the armoured car (road dependence, limited vision and excessive size).[117] In another article, Izquierdo suggested that, if the enemy had not consolidated a resistance line yet, tanks could be temporarily attached to an attacking cavalry unit in order to act as close support artillery.[118]

If Gascueña thought that the actual fighting of cavalry would usually be on foot, others were more sanguine about actions on horseback. A proposed role for horsemen was the support of tanks in the attack. After all, if the infantry could advance under the cover of smoke screens, why not the faster cavalry?[119] This proposal was answered by Captain Izquierdo, who stated that mounted troops would be destroyed in any attack against an organized front. The tank needed the support of foot troops to fight against the anti-tank defences. Of course, the cavalry could dismount to do this, but this action turned the cavalry into second class infantry, instead of remaining the 'fast' arm. Using as an example for his arguments the battle of Cambrai (November 1917), Izquierdo concluded that only infantry and tanks could

[117] Joaquín Izquierdo Jiménez, 'Necesidad de auto-ametralladoras-cañones y carros de combate en cooperación con la Caballería', MC, XVI, 156 (January-February 1931), pp. 12-5.
[118] Joaquín Izquierdo Jiménez, 'Carros de combate en cooperación con la Caballería', MC, XVI, 158 (May-June 1931), pp. 22-5.
[119] Julián Gómez Seco, 'La Caballería en las campañas modernas. Nuevas modalidades de su empleo eficaz', MC, XVI, 160 (September-October 1931), pp. 19-23.

attack organized defensive lines; therefore, the idea of using cavalry as a replacement for infantry had to be discarded. Once a breach had been opened, the cavalry would exploit the success (supported by tanks, if possible), but not before a complete breakthrough.[120]

This possible modus vivendi of the cavalry with motor vehicles was not seen as a happy compromise by other essayists. Major Hernández Ballester rejected the mixture of small horse and motor units to carry out tactical missions. Mechanization provided operational means and procedures which were very different to those of the forces relying on horses. Horse units were adequate as mobile tactical reserves, and for liaison and rear security missions. Motorized troops, in turn, could achieve strategic surprise and move quickly to threatened sectors of the front, but they would have to give up exploiting their speed in order to keep contact with the slower elements.[121]

In a similar vein, Lieutenant García Albors, who believed that talking of the end of the cavalry was premature, also thought that mixing mounted and motorized troops in a cavalry division could damage its effectiveness, since its components tended to act in a dissociated way.[122] It is worth noting that, in this period, the French army organized composite divisions of armour, cavalry and motor troops, which in practice failed to operate as integrated fighting outfits.[123]

Hernández Ballester went further and proposed the creation of fully motorized major outfits in order to make an effective use of

[120] Joaquín Izquierdo Giménez, 'Colaboración de los carros de combate. Infantería con la Caballería', MC, XVII, 162 (January-February 1932), pp. 15-23.
[121] Antonio Hernández Ballester, 'La combinación de las Armas', MI, XXII, 262 (November 1933), pp. 377-8.
[122] García Albors, Motorización, pp. 96-102.
[123] Wheldon, pp. 63-4.

their capacity for strategic mobility, instead of spreading motor assets in small batches in every major unit. Moreover, by having to operate beside strong motorized units, generals would learn to assess the latter's real capacity and combine these forces with traditional, non-motorized troops.[124]

This chapter has shown that the Spanish army had an interest in the tank before the First World War was over, but its efforts to purchase a first batch were unsuccessful until 1921. However, this initial interest did not turn into realistic plans for building up a sizeable armoured force and the Spanish military remained satisfied by adopting a conventional doctrine in which tanks operated only to support infantry. All the same, the evidence discussed in this chapter shows that by the early 1930s motorization was a concept gaining ground within the Spanish military environment, although its implementation was slowed by financial constraints. More doubts were expressed about mechanization. The use of tanks was accepted only in the role of supporting the infantry. Although a small section of the contemporary essayists shared the ideas on future warfare envisaged by the mechanization pioneers, the rest openly disagreed or saw mechanized armies as unsuitable for a country like Spain. Industrial backwardness and rugged ground were certainly tangible obstacles to the development of a mechanized force. More questionable were the criticisms based on the alleged harmful influence of armour on morale.

Nevertheless, in this writer's view, the professional literature assessing the future of cavalry by the early 1930s perhaps offered a promising and unperceived way to make mechanization more acceptable. Such literature shows an incipient acceptance of

[124] Hernández Ballester, 'La combinación de las Armas', pp. 376-7.

mechanization to support cavalry missions; initially, by encouraging the use of armoured cars; then, by recommending the integration of some kind of fast tank in cavalry major units. This was probably a logical conclusion for an arm which had to fight like infantry and whose last claim to a distinctive status - mobility on horseback - was challenged with increasing success by motor transport.

However, it is also true that effective mechanization could not be implemented overnight. In situations like this, innovation - even if recognized as desirable - must be pursued without damaging the morale of the existing forces which have to carry on operating for the immediate future. Thus, in the case of cavalry, these had to be reassured about the usefulness of the horse in contemporary warfare. As an essayist in military technology has written, a military organization cannot help finding it 'difficult to function in that somewhat schizophrenic mode...'.[125] This does not seem to be an unusual situation for branches of the armed services in a period of technological transition, and the Spanish cavalry was indeed moving towards such a transitional stage in the 1930s. Therefore it is no surprise that the contemporary professional literature still displayed defences of the horse beside acknowledgements of the rise of the machine. Indeed, the arguments for keeping strong mounted forces were still widespread in the Spanish military environment after 1939.[126]

[125] R. James Woolsey, 'The Sources of Technological Innovation', in Shai Feldman (ed.), Technology and Strategy: Future Trends (Tel Aviv, 1989), p. 21.
[126] Juan Carlos Losada Malvárez, Ideología del ejército franquista (1939-1959) (Madrid, 1990), pp. 59-66. Losada states that these views were due to the stress on the morale-related factors in warfare in Franco's army: ibid., pp. 48-59.

8.- OFFICER TRAINING, MAJOR UNITS AND ARMOUR AT WAR, 1936-1939.

Political, social and ideological subjects have dominated academic historians' interest in the Spanish Civil War, to the detriment of the study of military issues. This has happened even though the war, which broke out as a half-successful coup d'état, turned into a struggle between two large regular armies after late 1936. And, in the last analysis, defeat on the battlefield sealed the fate of the republican side.

This chapter's purpose is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of the conduct of the war, but to survey and discuss how both armies faced during the war three issues tackled in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The first section looks at the ways the nationalist and republican armies trained and promoted their officers. The second section surveys factors which weighed on the organization and command of major units on both sides, and how successful they were. The third section examines the reaction (or the lack of it) on both sides to the actual operational experience with armour. It is hoped that this survey will go some way to casting light on these issues neglected by academic scholarship.

1. The officer corps and the shadows of its past.

a) The pre-war officer corps after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

Corporate factionalism must be borne in mind when studying the organization and performance of the officer corps of the Spanish Civil War. The following section illustrates how corporatism and its related issues left traces in both sides' officer corps, from basic officer training to senior command.

The Spanish army had slightly over 15,000 regular officers

(including those of the para-military police forces) in July 1936. But the outbreak of the Civil War thinned the ranks of the officer corps. Many officers were killed or shot after being captured in the initial clashes of the military uprising. Others, who were considered out of sympathy with the side which had prevailed in their garrison, were murdered, sentenced to imprisonment or jailed under suspicion. Finally, there were those who went into hiding because they were in the wrong zone for their political leanings. The republican side got the worst of the split of the Spanish officer corps into two unequal parts. Including those who came back from retirement (due to age or Azaña's decree of 1931), the republican side could resort to a pool of 5,500 professional officers at best, against about 8,000 who served in the nationalist army during the war.[1]

There was also the complementary list, which had 6,100 reservist officers in 1936. According to Gárate, 2,000 of them joined or were called up by the nationalists, whereas 1,100 or 1,200 served in the republican army. The rest did not join either side.[2] These figures of regular and reservist officers were insufficient for the mass armies which both sides built up during the war, and republicans and nationalists had to look for other ways of officering their armies.

b) <u>Junior officers</u>.

On 4 September 1936, the nationalist army created the rank of <u>alférez provisional</u> (temporary second-lieutenant). After a period

[1] The republican side's figure (which includes perhaps up to 2,000 retired officers) is taken from Salas Larrazábal, <u>Ejército Popular</u>, I. 186-7; the nationalist army's figure is taken from Jesús María Salas Larrazábal and Ramón Salas Larrazábal, 'La Guerra', in <u>Historia General de España</u>, XVII. 316, XVII. 318. This last figure probably includes 1,500 to 2,000 retired officers: José María Gárate Córdoba, <u>Alféreces provisionales. La improvisación de oficiales en la guerra del 36</u> (Madrid, 1976), pp. 28, 31.

[2] Gárate, <u>Alféreces provisionales</u>, pp. 31-3.

of improvisation, temporary officer training was organized in separate arm schools by General Orgaz (head of the nationalist command for manpower and training) by late April 1937. Although career non-commissioned officers could enter these schools, most candidates came from a civilian background. They needed to be at least eighteen years old and not older than thirty, to have passed the senior secondary education, and to have at least two months' experience at the front. They would take a platoon leader course for one month (two after early 1938) and be given a temporary commission with the rank of second-lieutenant. The nationalist army commissioned 29,000 temporary second-lieutenants, although 7,000 got their commissions too late in the war to go into action.[3]

A few days after the nationalist side (15 September 1936), the republican army also organized the training of temporary officers (oficiales en campaña) in the brand new People's War Schools (Escuelas Populares de Guerra). The requirements for entrance were roughly similar to those of the nationalist side, and the training courses lasted from one to three months; in general the republican courses tended to be longer than the nationalist ones. There were also divisional basic officer schools which ran courses for company officers and trained non-commissioned officers as platoon leaders. The republican army commissioned between 10,500 and 11,200 officers in the war schools and 15,000 in the divisional and army corps schools. The political militias provided another 10,000 officers during the first months of the war (this figure included promoted militiamen and regular military men who joined the militias on their own).[4]

[3] Ibid., pp. 39-63, 115-6, 135-65, 331.
[4] José María Gárate Córdoba, Tenientes en campaña. La improvisación de oficiales en la guerra del 36 (Madrid, 1976), pp. 23-33, 49-80, 101-79, 239-40; Michael Alpert, El ejército republicano en la guerra civil, 2nd edition (Madrid, 1989), pp. 139-46.

According to Alpert, the republican war schools suffered from several internal problems which reduced their effectiveness in training officer candidates. There certainly was a shortage of adequate teaching staff, but the syllabi also were excessively theoretical and the instructors were too fond of perfunctory, conservative teaching methods. The republican war schools also initially overemphasized the educational requirements; until August 1937 fighting experience, character and political commitment (features often found in militia officers) were not valued as much as the ability to pass examinations.[5]

Alpert's criticisms remind one of those applied to Spanish military education after 1893 and its fondness for syllabi of bookish content and for testing the intellectual powers of officer candidates rather than their psychological suitability. This similarity suggests that corporate inertia weighed much on the reorganization of the republican army. In view of the results, the legacy of Spanish military education in the 1893-1927 period was a dead weight for the republican efforts at building up an effective regular army.

Corporate factionalism seems to have influenced republican officer training in another way as well. In his report on the republican army's performance in the battle of Teruel, a Lieutenant-colonel Morales (of the artillery corps) complained that the officer training organization lacked enough unity, because the branches of the service still considered themselves as watertight compartments. Morales thought it urgent to put all the professional matters of officer training under a single authority in order to impose uniform syllabi for temporary officers.[6]

[5] Alpert, Ejército republicano, p. 166-70.
[6] Las operaciones de Teruel, 25 February 1938, Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Republicana (hereafter AMA-ZR) 65/787/6.

Although assessing the validity of Morales' views is beyond this thesis' scope, there are reasons to think that his assertions were not totally unfounded if the reader bears in mind the inter-corps frictions around officer training surveyed in Chapters 2 and 5.

By contrast with the republican side, the nationalist army focused on a clear-cut goal: building up a cadre of junior commanders (the alféreces provisionales), who were officers of the 'heroic leader' pattern. This pattern was often found among the 'africanists' and became a role model for the Saragossa military academy's officer candidates. For performing such a role, intellectual performance did not count as much as morale. Nevertheless, the nationalist army was fortunate in having - unlike the republican side - a large enough pool of would-be temporary officers satisfying both requirements. The alféreces provisionales were usually educated youths of conservative middle-class background, who, moreover, had a strong sense of commitment to the nationalist cause (even if they lacked any concrete political affiliation).[7]

Strong commitment certainly facilitated the mission of these officers, who had the primary task of 'pulling' the troops through resolute, exemplary leadership in combat. This kind of leadership was indeed necessary for troops who, at least sometimes, seemed to have no taste for the fighting. An indication of this last point is, for example, a paper of early January 1938 written by Martínez de Campos (then a senior artillery commander). Among other issues, he commented on the nationalist infantry's unwillingness to advance under enemy fire and fight at close quarters in the last stage of the assault. Too many infantry units were inclined to expect the artillery to crush the enemy resistance. And if they

[7] Busquets, pp. 109-11.

failed to take advantage of the artillery support, these units did not even come near the republican positions.[8]

The republican army, in contrast, did not manage to create an effective counterpart of the alféreces provisionales. The best-educated officer candidates were not always ardent republican supporters, or they were unwilling to get involved too much in a highly politicized army. And, on the contrary, the most spirited temporary officers often were ill-educated. Lots of republican non-professional officers were of peasant or working-class background and poorly educated. It must be no surprise that they were hard put to apply professional skills requiring literacy (e.g. map-reading).[9]

c) Wartime promotion.

Both sides followed different policies in relation to promotions and appointments of commanders for the increasing number of major units in their armies. The republican government carried out many selective promotions in the regular list. Given the situation of the republican side, political loyalty weighed heavily in the selection. After all, quite a few republican regular officers were 'geographical loyalists' (i.e. they limited themselves to serving the side which had prevailed in the place where the outbreak of war found them).[10]

According to Salas Larrazábal, most officers reckoned to be supporters of the republican cause in August 1936 were promoted

[8] Ejército del Norte, Comandancia General de Artillería to Comandante General de Artillería de los Ejércitos Nacionales, 8 January 1938, Archivo General Militar de Avila: Zona Nacional (hereafter AMA-ZN) 15/2/1.
[9] Alpert, Ejército republicano, p. 168; Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1509-10; Gárate, Tenientes en campaña, pp. 234-5. After one year of war, training instructions for the republican crack manoeuvre army corps issued in October 1937 emphasized map-reading as a skill which officers had to learn: Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Estado Mayor Central, Plan para los cuerpos de ejército de maniobra, 17 October 1937, AMA-ZR 53/463/1.
[10] Alpert, Ejército republicano, pp. 105, 118-25.

twice during the war, and many were awarded a third promotion. The backing of a political party (the Spanish Communist Party was rather active in this matter) or a trade-union could also speed up the career of a regular officer. But an unfortunate outcome of this political selection was that able professional officers without partisan commitments were left unassigned, especially in the early months of the conflict (after mid-1937, under Minister of Defence Prieto, political commitment was somewhat less decisive in the choice of professional officers for senior commands).[11]

In contrast, seniority was the rule for most wartime promotions on the nationalist side, and promotions by war merit were conceded sparingly.[12] Moreover, after 4 September 1936, the nationalist army filled many vacancies at middle and higher command levels through the entitlement (habilitación) of regular officers up to the rank of colonel. This was a temporary promotion for holding command appointments assigned to a higher rank. The officer assumed the privileges and responsibilities (though not the pay) of the temporary rank until his services were no longer required. In practice, most entitlements were confirmed as promotions in the army list by 1940.[13]

The quality of the nationalist company and battalion commanders deteriorated as the war proceeded. Due to the number of casualties, the ablest regular officers at this level (such as those serving or with fresh experience in the Army of Africa when the war broke out) became reserved for the crack outfits. The rest of the nationalist units often had to get along with unenthusiastic officers of limited professional proficiency, who

[11] Gárate, Tenientes en campaña, pp. 229-31; Alpert, Ejército republicano, pp. 130-1, 175; Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, I. 492, II. 1507-9; Tagüeña, p. 103.
[12] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1506-7.
[13] Gárate, Alféreces provisionales, pp. 35-7.

had developed their pre-war careers in the undemanding routine of the peninsular provincial garrisons.[14]

Although these professional shortcomings did not go unnoticed, the nationalist army maintained undeserving officers in their posts. According to Salas Larrazábal, the cause of this policy was the disproportionate prestige which surrounded the military on the nationalist side. The dismissal of incompetent regular officers could harm the public image of the officer corps, and it must not be forgotten that this prestige, deserved or not, was also a source of the military's undisputed authority in nationalist Spain.[15]

Comparing promotion policies on the two sides, it is clear that the republican government, pressed by necessity, chose an option which was bound to reproduce the problems of an oversized officer corps which had been so damaging for the Spanish army since the mid-nineteenth century. The massive republican promotions were permanent and, as Alpert notes, such prodigality would likely have posed a source of problems for the republican government if the latter had won the war.[16]

Perhaps that kind of promotion was the most powerful incentive for a regular officer corps whose sympathy with the republican cause was lukewarm, but it still preserved a careerist bent. Nevertheless, even this incentive was not enough for some officers. In September 1937, most professional military men who had risen in the militias to a rank higher than their regular one

[14] Kindelán to Franco, 16 August 1938, Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, Documentos inéditos para la historia del Generalísimo Franco (tomo I) (Madrid, 1992), pp. 194-5; Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1507, II. 1509. There were promotion courses for temporary officers; 8,000 passed the lieutenant (company commander) courses, and 500 passed the captain courses (battalion commander), but no source gives figures about how many held the command they were qualified for: Gárate, Alféreces provisionales, pp. 233-61, 279-93, 331, 335.
[15] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1507, II. 1510.
[16] Alpert, Reforma militar, p. 234.

chose to leave the regular list and keep the militia rank with its temporary status, rather than coming back to the regular list with their army rank.[17] It seems as if the affected officers thought that the republican government would accept their non-regular promotions as a fait accompli; so the higher the rank, the better their professional future.

On the contrary, the nationalist army's policy of entitlements and seniority certainly was a sensible way to avoid the controversies about promotion by war merit which had characterized the Spanish military in the preceding decades. Unfortunately for the future Spanish professional officers, the soundness of this wartime policy was spoilt after the conflict by the decision to commission in the regular list those temporary officers who, after passing an abridged syllabus, wanted to pursue a military career. Almost 10,000 subalterns entered the regular officer corps at a stroke. This decision certainly strengthened the officer corps' loyalty to Franco's regime, but it also condemned the Spanish army to put up again with the consequences of having oversized officer lists.[18]

d) Senior officers.

Another legacy of the Spanish military academies of the early twentieth century can be seen in the performance of nationalist commanders at the level of brigade, division and army corps. These officers had passed through the military academies in the 1900s and 1910s, and in Chapter 2 it was pointed out that the teaching methods of these establishments did not encourage the development of individual initiative. On the contrary, officer candidates got used to unthinking obedience.

[17] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1549.
[18] On the temporary officers in the post-war army, see Busquets, pp. 106-13.

Such behaviour was described by General Kindelán (the commander-in-chief of the nationalist air force) in a letter sent to Generalissimo Franco during the battle of Teruel (December 1937-February 1938).[19] Kindelán attributed the field commanders' poor performance to the lack of willing obedience: if the orders they were given could not be carried out easily at the first attempt, the commanders did not make any further effort to overcome the difficulties and did not even look for excuses. No initiative on the battlefield could be expected from such commanders. Kindelán reported how on 5 January 1938 nationalist aircraft had bombed and strafed the enemy positions for half an hour in front of a nationalist division, but instead of taking advantage of the air attack (in which one aircraft was shot down), the nationalist troops limited themselves to watching the action and eating their midday meal. When the divisional commander was asked about this inaction, he answered that he had only been ordered to protect the advance of the division operating on his right flank.

In view of cases like the one described above, it is not surprising that senior commanders became annoyed. Thus Kindelán also pointed out that General Dávila (GOC Army of the North) reckoned his divisional commanders as bad, and that General Vigón (Dávila's chief of staff) had the same opinion about most divisional commanders operating in Teruel, but the latter was even more dissatified with the army corps commanders, who did not know 'the matter they have in hand' (lo que traen entre manos).

These command problems in the nationalist army probably stemmed to a large extent from limited communications networks together with poor command and control arrangements, which could not assure

[19] Kindelán to Franco, 6 January 1938, Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, Documentos inéditos para la historia del Generalísimo Franco (tomo I) (Madrid, 1992), pp. 174-6.

contact between field commanders and their staffs. Kindelán pointed out in the same letter that there were always staff officers in Dávila's headquarters but, if asked about the situation at the front, they did not know what was going on. The situation at the army corps headquarters was worse: during the day, they had only a subaltern, who often was ignorant even of the whereabouts of the army corps commander and his staff.

The limitations of the nationalist command at divisional and brigade level can also be seen in evidence some months later during the campaign of the Levant. On 24 May, General Aranda (GOC Galicia Army Corps) reported to Dávila that the commander of the 4th Division (one of the best nationalist divisions) was running into command difficulties because he had no able brigade commander; this forced him to intervene personally in the operations of smaller units and meant that he could not delegate the division's command to any subordinate. If this was the situation in an elite division, one cannot help wondering what happened in the others.[20] And about the same time, the Castile army corps progressed too slowly because of bad weather and terrain, but also because the divisional commanders neglected to fulfil keenly the army corps' operations plan; they were so concerned with their commands' individual endeavours that they were unable to carry out concerted actions in an effective way.[21]

If these things happened on the nationalist side, it is easy to understand the underperformance of the republican army. Alpert's

[20] José Manuel Martínez Bande, La ofensiva sobre Valencia (Madrid, 1977), p. 82 fn 70. On the nationalist crack divisions, see Payne, Politics, pp. 389-90.
[21] Observaciones entregadas en 'Términus' [codename for the nationalist general headquarters' field command post] por el Comandante Beltrán, a su regreso de enlace con el Cuerpo de Ejército de Castilla, 21 May 1938, Archivo General Militar de Avila: Cuartel General del Generalísimo (hereafter AMA-CGG) 7/375/103; Resumen de las observaciones hechas por el Jefe que suscribe en relación con las operaciones realizadas por el C. de E. de Castilla durante los días 22 a 28 de Mayo, ambos inclusive, 30 May 1938, AMA-CGG 7/375/103.

analysis of the background of the field commanders of both armies about mid-war (by the time of the battle of Teruel) shows that, when the war broke out in 1936, the republican regular officers commanding major units had on average a lower rank (and therefore were theoretically less trained for senior command) than their counterparts in the nationalist army. Surveying the nationalist side's major unit commands in January 1938, Alpert points out that the three army commanders were already general officers when the war broke out in 1936; the army corps commanders were colonels at least, and most infantry division commanders (besides being infantry officers) had also reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel.[22]

On the other side of the hill, the republican army commanders in December 1937 were (in terms of their positions in 1936) two brigadiers, an artillery lieutenant-colonel, an infantry major who had been seconded to the police before the war, and a retired infantry major. Most army corps were commanded by professional officers, but they had reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel at best. A similar situation existed among the division commanders; even so, 17 out of 59 divisional commander appointments (28 per cent) had been given to militia officers. The existing 188 brigades had only 49 regular commanders or chiefs of staff, and most of them had been captains with little, if any, operational experience. Moreover, many regular officers held appointments during the conflict which did not fit their professional training and pre-war experience: e.g. artillery officers were appointed as commanders of infantry divisions or brigades, or subalterns as chiefs of staff. Headquarters down to army corps level had enough trained staff officers, but these were very scarce in the

[22] Alpert, Ejército republicano, p. 100. An exception in the army corps commanders was Yagüe, who was an infantry lieutenant-colonel: AME 1936.

divisions and virtually unknown in the brigades.[23]

The politicized environment of the republican side also weighed on the performance of many a regular officer, whose situation was similar to that described by the social scientist Teitler as affecting the professional officer involved in an armed conflict between antagonistic ideologies: 'As an ideologically neutral expert he will be unable to inspire this [his side's fighting] mass, and he will have to compete with military leaders whose training and performance is measured according to non-professional standards.'[24] Certainly many non-professional officers (often political and trade-union activists turned militiamen) rose and took the place of regular ones in the command of combat units. Some of the militia officers, despite a limited professional expertise, displayed a natural ability for military command. Indeed, the most spirited republican units were commanded by militia officers.[25]

However, the republican senior commanders were wanting in one of the most valuable assets in war: experience. Whether they were fast-risen regular officers or outstanding militia leaders, the republican army's brand new, green major unit commanders and staffs needed time to learn to command their troops effectively. They went a long way in learning to do this (for instance, the assault crossing of the Ebro river, in the summer of 1938, was quite well prepared and executed), but in the meantime their army got too worn out to withstand the nationalist onslaughts and turn

[23] Alpert, Ejército republicano, pp. 100-2, 126. In an effort to overcome the handicap in the middle and higher levels of command, republican divisions, army corps and armies ran courses on battalion and brigade command (for captains and majors) and divisional and higher command (for senior officers); in May 1937, the republican army also set up a staff college, whose two/three-month courses were passed by 198 students (out of 320 course vacancies offered): Alpert, Ejército republicano, p. 167; Gárate, Tenientes en campaña, pp. 181-94, 248.
[24] Gerke Teitler, The genesis of the professional officers' corps (Beverly Hills and London, 1977), p. 19.
[25] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, I. 525-6, II. 1507, II. 1509.

the tide of the war.

2. The organization of major units.

a) The republican new model army and the composite brigade.

The many defeats of the militia columns which, after the breaking up of many loyal army units , made up the bulk of the government forces in the summer of 1936, convinced the republican cabinet to organize a new regular army. This army was to be innovative in its organization by choosing the composite brigade as the basic major unit.

Precedents of the composite brigade in the Spanish army before the war have already been surveyed in Chapter 6. The composite brigade was a model of unit extensively discussed by the Spanish military essayists and partly adopted for the army force structure before July 1936. Therefore, the Spanish republican officers in charge of the organization of the new army needed little, if any, encouragement and guidance from foreign advisers to choose this major unit model.[26] Moreover, it is plausible that the republican command thought that combined arms brigades could be ready for combat sooner than conventional divisions, at a time when the nationalist columns of the Army of Africa were heading fast towards Madrid.

Thus the composite brigade became the fundamental major unit of the republican army's organization.[27] The composite brigade was officially set up in the early days of October 1936. It had a headquarters, four infantry battalions, a cavalry squadron, a field artillery battalion, a composite group of engineers and

[26] See also Alpert, Ejército republicano, pp. 76-7.
[27] These paragraphs about the organization of the republican army are based on the scholarship provided by Ramón Salas Larrazábal: 'Los efectivos del Ejército Republicano', Historia y Vida, VI, 66 (September 1973), pp. 15-9; the first two volumes of Ejército Popular; and 'El Ejército popular de la República', in Hernández Sánchez-Barba and Alonso Baquer, VII. 81-155.

signals, and service units; its original strength was about 3,800 troops. This establishment underwent several changes during the war. The most significant one came in June 1937, when there was a cut in the strength of the brigade's artillery (reduced to a single battery of three pieces) and service troops. The cause of this cut lay in the insufficient capacity of the republican side to satisfy the equipment needs of its fast-grown army. On the other hand, the strength of the infantry battalion increased steadily (from 633 to 828 officers and men). The official overall strength of the brigade fluctuated between 3,500 and 4,200 troops.

The course of the conflict made it necessary to expand the republican army's force structure to include divisions, army corps, field armies and army groups. The republican division was born on 31 December 1936 and included an artillery battalion, an engineer company (later abolished), a few service units and (later in the war) a machine gun battalion; each division usually grouped three brigades, and it became officially over 14,000-strong. The structure of army corps and field armies was implemented from March 1937 on, and, by October 1938, the republican order of battle included 2 army groups, 6 armies, 23 army corps, 70 divisions and 200 brigades.

Salas Larrazábal has argued that the republican armies were usually much stronger than the republicans' memoirs and accounts, and many histories of the war, admit.[28] His point is not unfounded, although, in this writer's view, Salas sometimes goes too far and overestimates the actual fighting strength of the republican army. For instance, he resorts to the official establishment of the republican division and points out that this was stronger in manpower than the nationalist one after late 1937.

[28] See, e.g., Salas Larrazábal, 'Los efectivos', pp. 19-27.

Thus whenever both sides deployed the same number of divisions on the eve of a campaign or battle the republicans should in theory have had an advantage in strength. And Salas Larrazábal also seems to assume that the republicans were able to field fully equipped units.[29] However, this argument is contradicted by his own criticism (also shared by Alpert) of the republican high command's penchant for organizing large numbers of units in a hurry, in which he states that the nationalist units in the field were usually stronger in manpower and equipment.[30]

The shortages in weaponry were perhaps more significant than those in manpower. The original composite brigade had a theoretical equipment of 108 light and 36 heavy machine guns. In late 1937, the scale of automatic weapons was reduced to 98 light and 32 heavy machine guns. And the figures became just 24 light and 24 heavy machine guns by the summer of 1938.[31] This last scale seems like a way of making a virtue of necessity, because it comes near some brigades' actual overall figures. For instance, on the eve of the battle of the Ebro, after a period of refitting, the brigades of the 35th Division (a seasoned unit which was to spearhead the republican offensive) did not have more than 40-odd light machine guns and a dozen heavy machine guns at best.[32] In short, the composite brigades lost much machine gun fire power (if they ever had the original scales) as the war went on.

Something rather similar can be said about rifles. The original rifle scale for the republican composite brigade was 2,897 rifles;

[29] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1617, II. 2171-3.
[30] Alpert, Ejército republicano, p. 259; Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, I. 575-6.
[31] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, I. 718 n 15, II. 1865.
[32] The exact figures for the 35th Division are as follows:

Brigade	Strength	Light machine guns	Heavy machine guns
XI	3,372	45	12
XIII	3,046	49	4
XV	3,233	49	7

Source: Martínez Bande, Ebro, p. 84 fn 103.

the figure was later cut to 2,413 (June 1937) and then increased to 2,969 (late 1937). Finally, the scale of the summer of 1938 was 1,860 rifles.[33] The increase in late 1937 may reflect an increase in the republican rifle stocks, but this must obviously have been a temporary situation, given the sharp fall in the 1938 scale (whose numbers come interestingly near those of the 35th Division's brigades on the eve of the battle of the Ebro).[34] Another source states that the theoretical scale of rifles for the composite brigade was 2,200 rifles (the figure seems to refer to those allocated to the infantry battalions), but in practice the usual numbers available in many republican brigades were from 1,600 to 1,800.[35] If this ratio was typical, this would mean that the average republican brigade often could not field more than four fifths of its theoretical scale of rifles. Therefore, it seems plausible to guess that the republican army's composite brigades (probably excepting those which were reckoned as crack units) would often be under strength, at least in terms of fire power.

The limitations of the republican officer corps affected the performance of the composite brigade. This was based on a sound, self-contained organization, but it also required a large establishment of trained staff personnel for its headquarters, which should take charge of issues previously managed at the divisional level. As Alpert points out, the mistake of the republican organizers was that they had created sophisticated units without realizing that the republican army lacked enough

[33] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, I. 718 n 15, II. 1865.
[34] The exact figures for the 35th Division are as follows:

Brigade	Strength	Rifles
XI	3,372	1,764
XIII	3,046	1,822
XV	3,233	1,782

Source: Martínez Bande, Ebro, p. 84 fn 103.
[35] Enciclopedia Espasa, 1936-1939 supplements sv 'España', II. 1462.

officers able to command them effectively.[36]

This flaw did not go unnoticed, nor was it the only one. A report of June 1937 concluded that the brigade should not have integrated field batteries with the standard field cannon, and that grouping the artillery in divisional battalions was a better arrangement.[37] The report of Lieutenant-colonel Morales after the battle of Teruel also criticized the existence of the brigade artillery, which, by dispersing the cannon available, went against the guiding principle of using the artillery arm in large concentrations (the only way to achieve effective outcomes). Morales reckoned the performance of the composite brigade unsatisfactory and proposed a return to the conventional three-battalion infantry regiment, without other arms' support units.[38] Nonetheless, in order to put the criticisms about the brigade artillery in perspective, the reader must bear in mind that many brigades - probably most - never had any field cannon at all.[39]

The introduction of the composite brigade also had effects on the doctrine for the tactical use of the division. As was shown in Chapter 6, Lieutenant-colonel Noreña had pointed out before the war that the composite brigade meant that the division commander would conduct the operations of homogeneous sub-units, instead of combining the efforts of separate arm outfits. The republican army indeed pursued this guiding principle. Its instructions (undated but surely issued after early 1937) on the organization and combat of a division defined the latter as a major unit which grouped

[36] Alpert, Ejército republicano, pp. 75, 77. For a first-hand account of the war experiences of a republican non-professional officer who became a composite brigade, division and army corps commander, see Tagüeña, pp. 101-98.
[37] Observaciones al empleo de la artillería en el ataque a Huesca del día 16 de Junio de 1937, 17 June 1937, AMA-ZR 55/545/8.
[38] Las operaciones de Teruel, 25 February 1938, AMA-ZR 65/787/6. See also Alpert, Ejército republicano, pp. 259-60.
[39] Enciclopedia Espasa, 1936-1939 supplements sv 'España', II. 1462.

several brigades and coordinated their combat. In order to focus the divisional command on this operational role, the division was devoid of logistical units of its own (excepting the medical services), since motor transport made it possible to supply the brigades from army corps or army magazines. Therefore the republican new model division only had the headquarters, two or three brigades, the medical echelon and attached artillery.[40]

This organization made the republican divisions into highly flexible units, which could exchange, detach or be given composite brigades according to the tactical situation without overloading the divisional command with logistical issues. This flexibility was used much during the defensive campaign of the Levant (April-July 1938), when the divisions became in practice mere headquarters units.[41] Nonetheless, given the republican problems in getting able senior commanders and staffs (surveyed above), it is not surprising that this capacity to modify the divisional orders of battle took a toll of the overall effectiveness. Martínez Bande, after noting that quite a lot of composite brigades were transferred from one division to another, were fielded separately within the republican orders of battle, or simply disappeared during the same campaign of the Levant, concludes that such organizational flexibility brought confusion and disorganization as well.[42]

b) <u>Organizational pragmatism in the nationalist army</u>.

By contrast with the rational-minded model developed by the

[40] Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Ejército de Tierra, <u>Instrucción número dos sobre la organización y el combate de una división</u> (n.d. [1937?]), p. 1. The copy used is filed in AMA-ZR 55/524/1.
[41] Salas Larrazábal, <u>Ejército Popular</u>, II. 1861-2.
[42] José Manuel Martínez Bande, <u>Valencia</u>, p. 59. The pre-war regulations advised against too frequent reorganizations of major units, since they damaged the latter's <u>esprit de corps</u>: RGU 1925, article 120.

republican side, the evolution of the nationalist force structure was a rough-and-ready process.[43] Since describing the many changes in the organization of the nationalist army until late 1937 would be a long-winded task, it will suffice to say that the nationalist order of battle in the first half of the war was broadly an assortment of territorial and field units. The strength of these commands depended on the local situation or their operational responsibilities. The nationalist armies were the highest territorial units, each one embracing several fronts. In turn, the fronts covered by the army corps and the territorial divisions and brigades resembled more those of conventional armies, army corps and divisions respectively, whereas several major field units were stronger than their name suggested.[44] The nationalist army was finally organized in field (i.e. non-territorial) army corps and standard divisions in late 1937. In December 1938, it fielded 4 armies, 12 army corps (plus 2 army corps-level commands), and 56 infantry and 2 cavalry divisions.[45]

The standard nationalist infantry division was initially based on the pre-war model, but it was weaker in artillery and support troops. According to the establishment of late 1937 the nationalist division had twelve infantry battalions, grouped into four tactical 'regiments' (they were not self-administering

[43] There is no comprehensive study on the development of the nationalist army's force structure, but a useful chronological account is found in 'El esfuerzo de guerra en ambas zonas durante la Cruzada', RHM, VIII, 17 (September-December 1964), pp. 90-2, 96-101, 106-17.
[44] For instance, on the Aragonese front by mid-1937, the 51st Division (22,000-strong) had 17 infantry battalions and 2 more attached, and a separate brigade (7,700-strong) had 9 battalions (plus some minor units attached): José Manuel Martínez Bande, La gran ofensiva sobre Zaragoza (Madrid, 1973), p. 89. By June 1937, the VII Army Corps, on the northern Madrid front, had only two divisions but it was over 50,000-strong: Jesús María Salas and Ramón Salas, XVII. 504. The six 'Navarrese Brigades', which operated as field units, were grouped in the 61st Division (a territorial command) in May 1937; they bore no resemblance to the pre-war brigades, since they were born as task forces (whose initial establishment was around 4,000 rifles and 6 to 8 artillery batteries); the first four Navarrese brigades grouped overall 32 infantry battalions in late March 1937 and two of them had reached divisional size by early July 1937: Enciclopedia Espasa, 1936-1939 supplements sv 'España', II. 1491; 'El esfuerzo de guerra', p. 97; Jesús María Salas and Ramón Salas, XVII. 461, XVII. 509.
[45] 'El esfuerzo de guerra', pp. 106-7, 109-12.

units) which in turn formed two brigades, and two (sometimes three) field artillery battalions plus small numbers of engineers and service troops. Its strength was between 10,500 and 12,000 troops.[46] The division was the basic self-contained operational unit in the nationalist army; brigades and regiments functioned only as tactical headquarters for the infantry battalions. Later in 1938, the nationalist divisions started organizing their infantry in three regiments or regimental groups (agrupaciones) of four battalions each.[47] This writer has not found in the sources consulted any explanation for this last change in the nationalist division's organization, which suppressed half of the sub-divisional commands (two brigade and one regimental headquarters). Perhaps operational experience convinced the nationalist army's command to adopt a leaner and more flexible divisional command structure, by simply increasing the infantry regiment's strength by one battalion.

c) Command and performance of major units.

Theoretically, the republican organization, based on the composite brigade (a model of unit set forth in the Spanish military literature and organization before the war), was a sound structure allegedly more suitable for manoeuvre warfare on extended fronts like those of the Spanish Civil War. On the contrary, the nationalist army operated with ad hoc formations for the first half of the war, and, once it set up a standard force structure, it initially followed the 1925 divisional organization, which was more suitable for methodical fighting on fortified fronts.

[46] G. López Muñiz, V. 712; Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1617; Jesús María Salas and Ramón Salas, XVII. 630.
[47] G. López Muñiz, V. 712. Indeed, the 4th and 5th (Navarrese) Divisions went into action with this organization in January 1938: José Manuel Martínez Bande, La batalla de Teruel, revised edition (Madrid, 1990), p. 126 fn 158.

Nonetheless, the nationalists carried out manoeuvre warfare operations more successfully than the republicans. An explanation for this paradox is found in the quality of the command: no organizational arrangement could make up for the professional limitations of the republican officer corps.[48] The republican army lacked trained cadres to staff the huge number of senior headquarters required by its expansion.

Moreover, the 1925 regulations were still the official doctrine (as seen at the end of the republican instructions on the organization and combat of a division).[49] The regulations' guidelines, with their methodical approach, matched badly with the would-be flexibility allowed by the composite brigade and the actual conditions of the Spanish Civil War (with extended fronts often allowing manoeuvre warfare). Experienced, well-trained officers perhaps would have been capable of overcoming the frictions between the official doctrine and front-line realities. Unfortunately, the republican army had to resort to officers who lacked either the proficiency or an appropriate environment (or both) to tackle such frictions.

The nationalist army, in turn, certainly did not display innovative organizational thinking with its attachment to the division as its basic operational major unit, but on this occasion conservatism paid off. After all, Spanish officers were already familiar with the 1925 regulations and had only to put into practice their contents as far as the situation made feasible.

[48] For instance, a report on the Huesca attacks of June 1937 stated that brigade commanders (who very often were not professional officers) had to be thoroughly taught to distinguish between the artillery's preparatory fire and support fire (the latter was delivered when the infantry moved forward): Observaciones al empleo de la artillería en el ataque a Huesca del día 16 de Junio de 1937, 17 June 1937, AMA-ZR 55/545/8.

[49] Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Ejército de Tierra, Instrucción número dos sobre la organización y el combate de una división, (n.d. [1937?]), p. 8. The copy used is filed in AMA-ZR 55/524/1.

Although centralization of command at the divisional headquarters meant a loss of tactical flexibility, it did not scatter professional officers amongst lots of low-level headquarters, and allowed the nationalists a more efficient use of the limited amount of artillery available, since the divisional commander could concentrate all the artillery assets of his unit for supporting any part of it.[50] Centralization of staff work at higher headquarters also prevented the dispersal of the limited numbers of trained staff officers serving on the nationalist side (106 out of 245 captains and field officers of the pre-war staff corps, plus 31 who came back from the reserve or retirement, were serving on the nationalist side by April 1937).[51]

3. The Spanish military and armour in the war.

a) The armour at the outbreak of war and sources of supply.

There is no agreement in the published sources about the exact numbers of tanks available on the eve of the Spanish Civil War. Nonetheless, it can be reckoned that seventeen tanks at least were in operational condition: five Renaults in each tank regiment, four Schneiders in the Central Firing School, and three Trubia prototypes attached to the Oviedo garrison.[52] The 1st Tank Regiment (Madrid) remained loyal to the government, which also got at least two Schneiders - captured after loyal units and leftist militias prevented the troops of the Central Firing School from joining the military uprising (the other Schneiders were allegedly

[50] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, I. 1168 n 64.
[51] AME 1936; Situación del Cuerpo de Estado Mayor del Ejército en 25 de abril de 1937 (1937). A school for ancillary staff officers was also created in July 1937; military experience was not necessary, but the candidates had to be thirty years old at least and university graduates. After a course of 30-40 days, they were commissioned as temporary lieutenants and performed bureaucratic tasks at headquarters, thus freeing regular staff officers for operational matters. Nonetheless, only 417 out of 1,170 course vacancies (35.6 per cent) offered during the war were filled: Gárate, Alféreces provisionales, pp. 170-4.
[52] Fernández Mateos, pp. 22; Javier de Mazarrasa, 'Carros de combate durante el conflicto 1936-39', Soldiers-Raids, 10 (July 1996), pp. 26-7.

knocked out).[53] The 2nd Tank Regiment (Saragossa) and the Oviedo garrison joined the rebellion.[54]

Both sides were later supplied from foreign sources. The republican side got a number of Renaults from France and Poland.[55] But the republican forces were mainly equipped with Soviet armour: 320-400 T-26s and around 50 BT-5s. The nationalist army was supplied with light tanks from Germany (around 140 Panzerkampfwagen Is) and Italy (150 Fiat-Ansaldo L-3/35s), and also used captured republican armour.[56]

b) <u>Republican armour</u>.

The republican armoured force was really born in mid-October 1936 after the arrival of Soviet tanks (around 50 T-26s) and armoured cars. The shortage of time and the Soviet tankmen's eagerness to get combat experience meant that only one company

[53] Servicio Histórico Militar, <u>Heráldica e historiales del Ejército. Tomo VI: Infantería</u> (Madrid, 1984), p. 22; Adolfo Meléndez Jiménez, 'Apuntes para la Historia de las Unidades de Infantería de Carros de Combate del Ejército español', <u>Ejército</u>, XXVII, 312 (January 1966), p. 27; Salas Larrazábal, <u>Ejército Popular</u>, I. 133-4; Fernández Mateos, p. 13. On the republican armour in the early stage of the war, see José Luis Infiesta Pérez, 'El empleo de los carros de combate en la guerra de España', <u>RHM</u> XXXIX, 78 (January-June 1995), pp. 149-51; Salas Larrazábal, <u>Ejército Popular</u>, I. 532-3, I. 574; Fernández Mateos, p. 13.

[54] Servicio Histórico Militar, <u>Heráldica e historiales</u>, p. 25; Fernández Mateos, p. 22. On the role of these tank units see Meléndez Jiménez, 'Apuntes', p. 27; and Fernández Mateos, p. 14. Until the end of 1937, the Renault platoon (enlarged in 1937 with captured Renaults) was the only armoured unit of the 2nd Tank Regiment, turned into a parent outfit for new infantry battalions, which retained the regimental name: Servicio Histórico Militar, <u>Heráldica e historiales</u>, p. 27. From early October 1936 to late November 1936, the nationalist army had a company of Italian Fiat-Ansaldo L-3/35s, with many Spanish crews; the unit was later incorporated in the Italian volunteer corps, and, in February 1937, another Spanish-manned company of L-3/35s was created and later became a two-company group (but its war record remains obscure): Servicio Histórico Militar, <u>Heráldica e historiales</u>, pp. 30-1. Since the units equipped with the L-3/35 fought under Italian command, their operations will not be discussed.

[55] Infiesta, 'El empleo de los carros', p. 151; Fernández Mateos, p. 22; Mazarrasa, 'Carros de combate', p. 28.

[56] Infiesta, 'El empleo de los carros', p. 200. Technical data about Italian, German and Soviet armour:

Model	Weight (tonnes)	Speed (kmph)	Main armament	Max. armour (mm)	Crew
L3/35	3.2	41	2 machine guns	13.5	2
PzKpfw IB	6	40	2 machine guns	13	2
T-26	9.2	28	1 45 mm gun	15	3
BT-5	11.5	62.7	1 45 mm gun	13	3

Source: Mazarrasa, <u>Carros en España</u>, pp. 34-9, 42-9. Both sides also tried to make their own armoured vehicles, but without remarkable results: Fernández Mateos, pp. 23-6.

could be manned with Spanish crews when the republican tank force (grouped into two battalions) went into action before the end of October. Though the number of Spanish tankmen increased in the following months, the tactical command of the armour was often held by Soviet officers well into 1937. This makes assessment of the pre-war Spanish doctrine's effectiveness difficult, since Soviet thinking and procedures weighed much in practice. Suffice to say, for this thesis' purposes, that the Soviet-led republican tanks did not achieve any offensive success in the early months, but they proved effective for delaying and defensive actions during the defence of Madrid and the battles around the capital (November 1936-March 1937).[57]

The republican army carried on expanding its armoured forces during 1937. Scholars disagree about the organization and strength of the republican armour (Infiesta thinks that Salas Larrazábal often overestimates the republican strength). Republican armour grew from one tank brigade in early 1937 to two armoured divisions by mid-1938. Nevertheless, brigades and divisions were just administrative units.[58]

The battle of Brunete (July 1937) was the first major strategic offensive of the republican army which committed a sizeable tank force (three battalions on the main front, according to Salas Larrazábal).[59] The republican army failed to take advantage of

[57] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, I. 533-4; José Luis Alcofar Nassaes [pseud. of José Luis Infiesta Pérez], 'Los carros sovieticos durante la guerra de España', Defensa, IX, 96 (April 1986), pp. 55-60.

[58] Spring of 1937: one tank brigade (four battalion-strong?) and one tank battalion (?) per field army (excepting the northern front, where it is not clear if there ever was fully organized a four-battalion tank regiment). October 1937: one armoured division (one tank and one armoured car brigade) with an strength of 124 T-26s (four battalions). April 1938: one armoured division of two composite brigades of armoured cars and tanks (80 tanks) and a separate unit (20 tanks) in the eastern army group, and one armoured division of three armoured car and tank brigades (150 tanks) in the central army group. This résumé (only illustrative) is based on the following sources: Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, I. 1103, I. 1164 n 30, II. 1867-8; and Infiesta, 'El empleo de los carros', pp. 160-1, 172-5.

[59] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1255-6.

its superiority in armour, and insufficient training weighed in this failure. A few days before the battle, the headquarters of the Army of the Centre ordered the Tank Brigade to send tanks in order to carry out tactical exercises with the units spearheading the offensive. However, the order was cancelled two days later.[60] The source does not provide any clear explanation of the cause, so it is not possible to judge fairly the soundness of this decision. But it seems reasonable to think that the republican troops' later performance was harmed by the lack of training.

On 19 July 1937, the headquarters of the Army of Manoeuvre issued instructions on the use of armour after the experiences of the first stage of the battle.[61] The instructions listed the mistakes made by the republican forces: the tank commanders were too independent, while the infantry failed to keep contact with the armour when the latter gained temporary advantages during the fighting; there was no effort to achieve tactical surprise; and the tank units were engaged in frontal assaults on defended villages which caused too many casualties. The report urged field commanders to adopt a closer liaison between tank and infantry units, better and more secret preparation of attacks, and the use of enveloping manoeuvres whenever villages were attacked.

The instructions' spirit generally followed the pre-war doctrine, since armour was subordinated to the infantry. Tanks were simply a complementary means of this arm, temporarily attached to its units, whose orders the armour should obey. However, the report recommended that tanks not be used in numbers

[60] Ejército del Centro, Estado Mayor, Sección de Operaciones, General Ejército Centro to Jefe Brigada de Carros, 28 June 1937, AMA-ZR 59/664/9; Ejército del Centro, Estado Mayor, Sección de Operaciones, General Ejército Centro to Jefe Brigada de Carros, 30 June 1937, AMA-ZR 59/664/9.
[61] Ejército de Maniobra, Estado Mayor, 3ª Sección, Instrucción reservada número 28, 19 July 1937, AMA-ZR 64/778/22.

below company strength (16 tanks). This last point was a change from the pre-war regulations, which reckoned the platoon as the basic fighting unit. The instructions also emphasized the effectiveness of using tanks in comparatively large masses. This certainly was a necessary reminder to correct the tendency shown during the battle by the republican commanders to retain tanks temporarily attached to their troops.[62] Such conduct led to the fragmentation of armour, which rendered it less effective.

The republican army made an attempt to use mechanized forces, albeit in a limited way, for an advance in depth during the offensive against Saragossa (24 August-7 September 1937). Antonio Cordón (then chief of staff of the Army of the East) states that he was the author of the offensive's operations plan; however, Martínez Bande and Salas Larrazábal give more credit for the plan to Colonel Rojo (chief of army general staff), a view shared by this writer.[63] It is more plausible that Rojo could plan for mechanized operations, given his knowledge of Fuller's ideas (see Chapter 7), although this does not mean that Cordón took no part in the preparation of the offensive.

According to the republican plan, once the enemy front had been broken through in the Zuera sector (on the northern bank of the Ebro river), a motorized task force (one lorried brigade plus two tank companies and ten armoured cars) was to advance southwards to occupy the northern quarter of Saragossa and the bridges on the Ebro (about 24 kilometres from Zuera). On the southern bank, another task force (two motorized brigades plus forty tanks and ten armoured cars) was to cover a distance of 36 kilometres in one day from the assembly area to Saragossa. Both advances were to be

[62] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1264.
[63] Cordón, pp. 352-4; Martínez Bande, Zaragoza, p. 97; Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1309-10.

carried out on the first day, entering Saragossa by the evening. The ground was suitable for mechanized forces and the enemy front was a thinly held screen of isolated positions and fortified villages. However, the attack on Zuera was unsuccessful, while the southern task force was delayed in seizing small nationalist positions on the first day, and the next day (when a fast advance to Saragossa was still possible, according to Rojo) it engaged instead in the fighting for Fuentes de Ebro on its right flank.[64]

The operations plan for the whole offensive probably was too ambitious for the republican army's capabilities, although a more resolute advance of the southern task force, by-passing the isolated points of resistance, might have turned the battle into a nearer run thing than it actually was for the nationalists. But the episode is interesting as the most significant use of combined forces of armour and motorized infantry by the republicans, and it shows that Colonel Rojo, planner of the offensive, saw the potential role of mechanized forces.

A nationalist document written sometime after the summer of 1937 concluded that the republican armour's poor performance revealed limited technical and tactical training, and a shortage of offensive spirit. This, plus the Russian tanks' technical limitations, meant that their role depended heavily on their fire power, so they ended up being used as mobile guns.[65] However, the role of mobile artillery was effective. During the battle of Brunete, republican tanks used on the defensive as mobile artillery screens were a serious obstacle for the nationalist

[64] This account of the offensive on Saragossa is based on Martínez Bande, Zaragoza, pp. 78-126. Soviet military advisors allegedly urged the republican command to a last effort against Saragossa in mid-October 1937, by using a brand new regiment equipped with recently arrived BT-5s, in the Fuentes de Ebro sector; the attack was a failure: Infiesta, 'El empleo de los carros', pp. 179-82; Fernández Mateos, p. 35.

[65] C.T.V., Centro Complementi e Adiestramento, Carros empleados en España, n.d., AMA-CGG 8/387/57.

troops. Since the range of their anti-tank guns was too short, the nationalist units demanded Italian-made light guns, which were reckoned more effective.[66] And the nationalist command was not unaware of the importance of tank fire power. The document assessing republican armour mentioned above also complained of the lightness and weak fire power of the German and Italian tanks, which had to rely too much on the close support of infantry to fight against enemy strongpoints.[67]

The republican side also assessed the performance of its own armour in the battles of the summer of 1937. In the instructions on offensive operations which he wrote in late September 1937, Colonel Rojo stressed that armour had to avoid frontal attacks against strongpoints, and use envelopment instead. Tanks must operate through speed, must by-pass points of resistance whenever possible, and must advance deeply into the enemy's rear. Moreover, they must be closely supported by anti-tank guns. In these instructions, Rojo's thinking looks more open-minded about the capabilities of armour than the 1928 regulations, and perhaps his knowledge of Fuller's ideas was not unconnected with his stress on speed and deep penetration.[68] The mention of close cooperation between armour and anti-tank guns (a feature of the nationalist doctrine, as will be shown below) suggests that Rojo maybe knew (possibly through captured papers) the other side's ideas on armour tactics and thought it wise to follow some of them.[69]

[66] Unidentified handwritten note for the chief of the Italian mission at the nationalist general headquarters (Cuartel General del Generalísimo), 19 July 1937, AMA-CGG 7/369/3.
[67] C.T.V., Centro Complementi e Adiestramento, Carros empleados en España, n.d., AMA-CGG 8/387/57.
[68] Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Instrucción número cuatro. Normas generales para el desarrollo de las maniobras ofensivas (Madrid, 1937), p. 15. A typescript of these instructions, titled 'Instrucciones generales para el desarrollo de la maniobra ofensiva de conjunto' and dated 21 September 1937, is filed in AMA-ZR 55/472/8.
[69] The republican staff college actually included references to nationalist instructions on armoured forces in its teaching, according to evidence which can probably be dated from late 1937 onwards: Escuela Popular de Estado Mayor, Táctica de Infantería, Resumen de las instrucciones del

Later on, the republican command continued to advise the use of armour in larger groups. On the eve of the offensive against Teruel (December 1937), the forces of the Army of the Levant were ordered always to use tanks en masse, usually in battalion strength.[70] However, this kind of instruction was in contrast with the teaching given about the same time in the republican army's staff college, where the students learnt that the company was the tactical unit but it did not fight as a single outfit under its commander, who had no responsibility for the actions of the tank platoons. The students of the republican staff college were also taught that, once the objective was reached, the tanks had to carry out a mopping-up operation and refrain from pursuing the enemy.[71] This contradiction reveals problems of organization of the republican army, whose field commanders might well feel confused by the lack of a common doctrine on the employment of armour.

The summer of 1937 seems to have been (in operational terms) the heyday of republican armour. Tanks no longer played so important a role for the rest of the war, and the tactical performance of the republican armour seems not to have differed in a significant way from that displayed in 1937. According to General Kindelán, the republican armour had even lost its offensive spirit by the time of the battle of Teruel. The republican tanks did not operate as aggressively as before and limited themselves to the role of accompanying artillery (though their fire power still intimidated the nationalist troops).[72]

enemigo a las Unidades de Tanques, n.d., AMA-ZR 55/520/1.

[70] Ejército de Maniobra, Estado Mayor, Sc. III y IV, Directivas al Ejército de Levante para el desarrollo de la operación dispuesta en su frente (extracto), 8 December 1937, AMA-ZR 64/778/16.

[71] Escuela Popular de Estado Mayor, Carros de combate, n.d., AMA-ZR 55/520/1; Escuela Popular de Estado Mayor, Carros blindados, Segunda promoción, Conferencias 3ª y 4ª, n.d., AMA-ZR 55/520/1.

[72] Kindelán, p. 123.

c) Nationalist armour.

The nationalist army's main tank unit was created on 1 October 1936, when the first batch of Panzerkampfwagen Is (PzKpfw Is) formed the brand new Tank Battalion, whose commanding officer was Major Pujales. It was initially based near Cáceres and its training was the responsibility of a German advisory group (it seems that German tankmen also took part in operations, at least occasionally). The 2nd Tank Regiment provided cadres to the unit, which initially had two tank companies (16 PzKpfw Is each) and one anti-tank gun company, and which became a two-battalion outfit by the end of the war.[73] This unit provided the armoured support for the nationalist armies in all the main campaigns and battles from late autumn 1936 to the end of the war.[74]

The nationalist armoured strength was very small in the early weeks of war. Nevertheless, the nationalists realized that even a small number of tanks could mean a significant advantage. One month after the outbreak of the conflict, Lieutenant-colonel Yagüe, commander of the nationalist columns advancing towards Madrid from the south, wrote to Lieutenant-colonel Franco Salgado-Araujo (then General Franco's aide) that half a dozen tanks would be very useful for his troops. They would save casualties in the

[73] October 1937: the unit was renamed the First Tank Battalion and divided into two groups of three tank companies (two equipped with PzKpfw Is and the third one with captured T-26s). February 1938: affiliation to the Spanish Legion. March 1938: it was called the Legion Tank Battalion (Bandera de Carros de Combate de la Legión) and incorporated a Renault company (created in December 1937), the tank school and a depot unit. October 1938: it turned into a regimental group (agrupación) affiliated to the 2nd Tank Regiment, and the tank groups became battalions. Meanwhile, a separate composite battalion-sized unit of tanks and armoured cars operated with the Army of the South. This résumé is based on the following sources: Servicio Histórico Militar, Heráldica e historiales, pp. 25-30; Infiesta, 'El empleo de los carros', p. 161; Fernández Mateos, p. 31; Jesús Salas Larrazábal, Intervención extranjera en la guerra de España (Madrid, 1974), p. 552-3.

[74] Madrid and the Jarama (November 1936-February 1937), Biscay (April-June 1937), Brunete (July 1937), Santander and Asturias (August-October 1937), Saragossa (late August-September 1937), Teruel (December 1937-February 1938), Aragon and the Levant (March-July 1938), the Ebro and Catalonia (August 1938-February 1939): Servicio Histórico Militar, Heráldica e historiales, pp. 35-141.

occupation of villages and small towns and provide more speed in the envelopment of enemy positions.[75] At this stage of the war, the bulk of the republican forces were poorly trained and led militiamen, who often panicked under the threat of being cut off by the nationalist troops.

The nationalist command seems to have reached contradictory (and somewhat biased) conclusions after its troops' early experiences in fighting with or against tanks. The first operations of the republican armour in the autumn of 1936 had been unsuccessful due to the lack of coordination with the infantry. As a result of these combats, on the eve of the assault on Madrid (early November 1936), the headquarters of the nationalist Army of the North concluded that tanks required the close support of solid, aggressive infantry.[76]

But, at the same time, the nationalist command probably became too sanguine about the capacities of its own armour against the stiffened enemy resistance in Madrid. Forest and built-up areas strengthened the fortifications in the outskirts of the city, and the assault troops faced better-organized republican forces. The assault on Madrid revealed the limitations of the nationalist armour and prompted the nationalist general headquarters - Cuartel General del Generalísimo (CGG) - to send instructions to the Army of the North about the tactical use of tanks. Tanks were said to be unsuitable for street-fighting: they were too exposed to enemy weapons while their own field of fire became more limited, and they could not give mutual support. It was better to keep them outside towns as a reaction force against enemy counterattacks. Tanks should not be scattered among columns, because their

[75] The letter is reproduced in Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mi vida, p. 351.
[76] Ejército del Norte, Estado Mayor, Defensa contra tanques, 5 November 1936, AMA-ZN 15/18/73.

effectiveness lay in the mass.[77] The battle for Madrid also proved that the nationalist tanks were not a match for the republicans' Soviet armour (the Tank Battalion - which reached a strength of 48 PzKpfw Is - suffered the worst losses of the whole war - 36 tanks).[78]

Some lessons of the first months of war seem to have been learnt by the nationalist army quicker than its republican foes. Peter Kemp, a British volunteer who fought with a nationalist militia unit in the battle of the Jarama, recalled the lack of coordination of the republican counter-attacks in La Marañosa sector (17 and 18 February 1937). Despite their initial gallantry, the infantry alone were unable to reach the nationalist positions. When the republican armour at last appeared (a single unit of six tanks), the infantrymen were too mauled to support its advance, and the unsupported tanks were driven off by artillery fire. Next day, the republican infantry troops renewed their pressure, but they were surprised by a well-timed counterattack of nationalist armour: sixteen PzKpfw Is charged from a flank and overran the enemy.[79] As shown by this account, the nationalist command seemed to become more aware (probably due to German advisors) of the advantages of using tanks in comparatively large formations.

The Tank Battalion was transferred to the Biscay front by late March 1937. The experience of previous operations was summed up in sheets providing the basic principles for the use of tanks. Experience had proved that, once the surprise effect had disappeared, the use of armour in the same place for several days

[77] Cuartel General del Generalísimo, Estado Mayor, Tercera Sección, Instrucciones sobre el empleo de los carros de combate, 19 November 1936, AMA-ZN 15/18/72.
[78] Salas, Intervención extranjera, p. 549; Fernández Mateos, pp. 33-4; Infiesta, 'El empleo de los carros', pp. 161-3.
[79] Peter Kemp, Legionario en España (Barcelona, 1975), pp. 97-8, 104-5 (original English title: Mine Were of Trouble).

in a row was unsuitable, since the means of the defence were strengthened quickly. The sheets also stressed the need for cooperation with motorized anti-tank units. Moving in successive, concealed bounds, the anti-tank guns provided a defensive screen against the enemy armour. Both tanks and anti-tank guns were integral parts of the armoured units.[80] These guidelines were certainly a result of the operations in the early months of war. The nationalist armour lacked enough capacity to exploit in depth initial successes, and the republican forces had proved in the battles around Madrid their resilience in the defence; therefore, it made no sense to insist on using tanks in sectors where the enemy could be reinforced. On the other hand, the tanks supplied by Germany were no match for the republican armour in fire power and protection, so the cooperation with anti-tank units had become essential.

The nationalist field commanders were provided with these sheets, but they seem not to have paid much attention to them. Colonel von Thoma (chief German advisor on armour, who became commander of the Afrika Korps in 1942) wrote to General Mola (GOC Army of the North) that the Spanish commanders' determination to issue orders of their own to the tank units had prevented the nationalist infantry from being much more successful.[81] The Spanish commanders on the Biscay front also had a tendency to over-use armour. Von Thoma complained to the CGG of the misuse of tanks, which fought on too rugged ground and were forced to cover long distances from one place of intervention to another; this wore tanks down and forced long repair and maintenance periods. Therefore, the nationalist general headquarters reminded Mola that armour had to be preserved to operate on ground more suitable for

[80] Hoja recordatoria para carros blindados, n.d., AMA-CGG 7/358/49.
[81] Von Thoma to Mola, 9 May 1937, AMA-ZN 15/21/24.

the tanks' tactics and mechanical performance.[82]

If the nationalist Spanish commanders were not well-versed in tank tactics, they could hardly be innovative in the use of armour. Salas Larrazábal reaches this same conclusion in his assessment of the performance of both sides in the battle of Brunete. If the nationalists actually achieved large armoured groupings on the battlefield, this was simply an extension of their practice of accumulating all their strength at the decisive point (as they did with their artillery and air force).[83]

The Spanish command's neglect was not limited to doctrinal issues alone. The nationalist armoured units paid little attention to maintenance and logistical problems, to von Thoma's chagrin. In January 1938, the CGG sent a message from von Thoma to the Army of the North to remind the nationalist command of the need to withdraw the tanks from the firing line by nightfall. If this was not done, mechanical maintenance was impossible, and fuel supply became very difficult because the trucks had to stop at a distance of several kilometres from the front.[84]

The administrative management of the nationalist armoured force was a reason for criticism as well. Colonel von Thoma affirmed, in a report dated 29 April 1938, that the state of affairs in personnel and training issues was very deficient.[85] The training period was too short, given the continuous need for replacements in the front line. This affected especially the training of tank drivers, who needed several months' training. Moreover, once the

[82] Cuartel General del Generalísimo, Estado Mayor, Sección Tercera to General Jefe del Ejército del Norte, 26 May 1937, AMA-ZN 15/21/24.
[83] Salas Larrazábal, Ejército Popular, II. 1263-4.
[84] Cuartel General del Generalísimo, Estado Mayor, Sección Tercera to General Jefe del Ejército del Norte, 7 January 1938, AMA-ZN 15/23/49.
[85] Coronel von Thoma, Informe del arma de Carros de Combate, 29 April 1938, AMA-CGG 8/388/10.

Tank Battalion became an unit to be manned by the Spanish Legion, the pool of trainees decreased in numbers and quality: personnel unsuitable for the Legion infantry battalions were often sent compulsorily from the depots, with no regard to their educational qualifications. Assignment to tank units seemed like a punishment. This must have been shocking for the German officer, because in his country the tank crews were hand-picked from the best manpower available.[86]

Von Thoma thought that the standards of the officers were not better than the other ranks', either in technical or tactical issues. Moreover, since trained officers were transferred from time to time from the armoured forces to new appointments, the basic courses for officers had to be repeated again and again, with almost no chance for advanced training.

As regards the tactical use of armour, von Thoma stated that the battalion and company commanders should stay with their units all the time. When the companies fought separated, the battalion commander should join the one whose tactical mission was most difficult. Von Thoma's advice on this matter is in clear contrast with the 1928 Spanish regulations, which assigned the battalion commander to higher headquarters with no tactical control over his units.

On the other hand, the separation of the tank companies was not desirable because it complicated their logistical support. The knowledge of the crews about mechanics was so poor that breakdowns which could have been solved at the front often necessitated moving the tank long distances for its repair, since there was just one mobile workshop. As a consequence of the problems of

[86] Kenneth Macksey, División Panzer. El puño acorazado (Madrid, 1974), p. 13 (original English title: Panzer Division. The Mailed Fist).

personnel and the lack of tanks for training, von Thoma concluded, the unit had become more and more deficient, both tactically and technically.

Nonetheless, von Thoma claimed several years later that he improved the effectiveness of the nationalist armour, by persuading the nationalist commanders to use armour more frequently in relatively large formations with the support of motorized infantry. But this is a rather exaggerated statement, surely based on an overrating of the initial success of the nationalist offensive of March 1938.[87]

The early stages of that offensive were the most successful operations of mechanized forces in the war. The bulk of the nationalist armour supported the attack of the Moroccan Army Corps. The British volunteer Peter Kemp took part, as a legionary infantry platoon commander, in the breakthrough and early pursuit. He recalled that each rifle company of his bandera (battalion) was preceded in the initial assault (on 9 March 1938) by a composite platoon of six PzKpfw Is and two Russian tanks.[88] The total armoured support force was twenty four tanks for the three rifle companies. This is an impressive increase in the strength of armour attached to infantry units when compared with the 1928 regulations (which proposed a usual ratio of one tank platoon per infantry battalion).

After breaking through the republican lines, the tank companies, followed by fast-marching infantry or task forces of three or four lorried infantry battalions, an artillery battery and the essential engineer and logistical units, advanced fast along roads

[87] Basil H. Liddell Hart, El otro lado de la colina (Madrid, 1983), pp. 117-8 (original English title: The Other Side of the Hill); Payne, Politics, pp. 400-1, 522 n 82.
[88] Infiesta, 'El empleo de los carros', p. 183; Kemp, p. 196.

into enemy territory.[89] Under the cover of aircraft, these columns deployed in fighting order behind a line of tanks whenever they encountered local resistance. If the latter seemed to be well entrenched, a short preparatory shelling preceded the assault. Kemp recalled that, despite repeating this procedure several times a day, the nationalist forces had few casualties.[90] The nationalist advance created pockets of republican troops which were left isolated after the rapid seizure of the main crossroads. These pockets were later mopped up by cavalry forces advancing across country.[91] Nonetheless, these were only small-scale actions. There was no attempt to carry out a major envelopment of the republican forces.[92] This was coherent with General Franco's preference for an operational procedure of relentless pressure to straighten the bends on the front line, a procedure whose effectiveness made good its lack of brilliance, and which Franco learnt, according to Alonso Baquer, from two able Spanish colonial soldiers of the Moroccan campaigns, Berenguer and Capaz.[93]

Although it was no blitzkrieg, the outcomes were remarkable by the current standards of the war (for instance, the army corps which Peter Kemp's battalion belonged to advanced 38 kilometres on foot in one day).[94] The nationalist success was made easier by the quick collapse of the enemy's command structure. A republican report after the offensive stated that the front line commanders became more interested in the security of their headquarters than in the conduct of operations. The report acknowledged that the nationalist tactics (deep advances along several axes with little

[89] José Manuel Martínez Bande, La llegada al mar (Madrid, 1975), p. 61.
[90] Kemp, p. 207.
[91] Luis María de Lojendio, Operaciones militares de la guerra de España. 1936-1939 (Barcelona, 1940), pp. 456-9.
[92] On the linear character of the nationalist advance, see Payne, Politics, p. 401.
[93] Miguel Alonso Baquer, 'Las ideas estratégicas en la guerra de España', in Hernández Sánchez-Barba and Alonso Baquer, VII. 29, VII. 50.
[94] Kemp, p. 207.

regard to liaison among the columns) prevented the republican forces from organizing new defensive lines in depth.[95]

Despite this operational success, von Thoma was later to stress the poor maintenance and training of the nationalist armour by the time of the battle of the Ebro. He sent a new memorandum, dated 13 September 1938, to Generalissimo Franco and General Orgaz (head of the manpower and ordnance support command), a copy of which was later sent to Dávila by Lieutenant-colonel Pujales (commanding officer of the Legion Tank Battalion). Von Thoma stated that no decision had been made about the proposals he put forward in his April report, because the tank units had been continuously in action. As a result, it was now almost impossible to supply enough spares, and the replacement personnel was untrained because nobody had been sent to the armour school in half a year. Von Thoma proposed to withdraw one tank company at a time from the front line, in rotation, in order to follow a short course. During the twelve days of the course, officers (von Thoma emphasized this point) and other ranks would be taught the essentials of tanks. Furthermore, the tank school needed to train replacements continuously in one month courses. Von Thoma proposed that the school have 25 drivers and 25 gunners (including officers) in training at any time, plus 15 drivers and 15 gunners under re-assessment in order to relieve those who had lost proficiency.[96]

On 3 October 1938, von Thoma sent a report on the tank strength of the Legion Tank Battalion's groups of companies to Orgaz, which provides further evidence regarding the German officer's statements. 11 out of 64 German tanks were being repaired; another

[95] De cómo ganó Yagüe la batalla del Sur Ebro, para ganar después los franquistas la del frente del Este, n.d., AMA-ZR 64/796/1.
[96] La Legión, Bandera de Carros de Combate, Mando to General Jefe del Ejército del Norte, 10 October 1938, AMA-ZN 15/27/32.

9 could not be used because there were no drivers for them, so nearly a third of the unit's German tanks were out of service. The situation of the Russian tanks was better, though one sixth of them (5 out of 32) were under repair. The reasons for this situation were poor maintenance (because it received insufficient time and the crews lacked training) and the use of armour on unsuitable ground (due to the incompetence of the senior commanders).[97]

The tactical misuse of armour had been pointed out by von Thoma in his September memorandum. He openly disapproved of the use of tanks on the Ebro battlefield. Despite the losses suffered for no gains, the nationalist forces carried on resorting to armour on unsuitable ground. Von Thoma attributed this to the nationalist commanders' limited knowledge of tanks. The presence of enemy tanks was no argument, because the republican army used them as artillery pieces in fixed positions, not for attacks on rocky ground. Lieutenant-colonel Pujales, in his introductory note to von Thoma's memorandum, also complained about the unsuitabilty of the ground, which forced tanks to move forward along paths in single file, without any possibility for deployment. Pujales concluded his note by asking Dávila for the withdrawal of his battalion from the Ebro sector.[98]

Later operations proved that the nationalist infantry still fell short of being trained sufficiently in cooperation with armour. During the defensive operations in the Serós sector (November 1938), the nationalist armoured units carried out support missions. However, after the day's fighting was over, the infantry

[97] Von Thoma to General Jefe de Movilización, Instrucción y Recuperación, 3 October 1938, AMA-ZN 15/27/24.
[98] La Legión, Bandera de Carros de Combate, Mando to General Jefe del Ejército del Norte, 10 October 1938, AMA-ZN 15/27/32.

withdrew in such a way that the tanks remained isolated on the battlefield. Nine tanks had broken down, and although five were recovered during the night, this involved a number of casualties. The CGG urged the Army of the North's command to draw the field commanders' attention to the misuse of armour by punishing those responsible for leaving behind nine tanks on the battlefield.[99]

The Spanish Civil War certainly was not a successful testing ground for mechanized warfare. To be fair, much of the ground where the main campaigns and battles were fought was unsuitable for a massive use of armour. Moreover, contemporary tanks were not developed enough (nor were the other arms trained to cooperate with armour) for conducting the sort of operations envisaged by the mechanization theorists of the 1920s and 1930s. Therefore it must be no surprise that the Spanish commanders did not think of any other use for tanks beyond the role of supporting the infantry. The only partial exceptions were Rojo's plan to seize Saragossa in 1937 and the nationalist breakthrough on the Aragonese front in March 1938, but these were operations limited in time and space.

Nonetheless, there was a difference between the republicans and the nationalists. Both based their use of armour on the Spanish pre-war doctrine. The nationalists remained attached to this and the German advisers (surely aware of their armour's limitations) seem to have been satisfied with introducing minor tactical innovations (using larger tactical units, employing anti-tank guns in support of armour). Indeed, the evidence shows that the Germans were mainly worried about organizational matters and the Spanish commanders' poor understanding of elementary tank tactics. Above

[99] Cuartel General del Generalísimo, Estado Mayor, Sección Tercera to General Jefe del Ejército del Norte, 20 November 1938, AMA-ZN 15/28/17.

all, there was a single, coherent policy.

By contrast, the evidence does not show such a coherence on the republican side. Officers were trained following the Spanish regulations in force before the conflict, whereas at the same time the republican command issued instructions (based on battlefield experience) which, in some points, differed significantly from the pre-war doctrine. How did an officer reconcile the teachings of the staff college (where he learnt that tanks must not pursue the enemy) with Rojo's instructions about advancing deep into the enemy rear? This problem was worsened by the nature of most of the republican officer corps. If even fully regular officer corps abroad were hard put to assimilate the procedures of armoured warfare, it is easy to understand why the improvised officers of the republican army so often failed to use armour effectively.

CONCLUSIONS.

It certainly was a grim irony of history that, after almost four decades of preparation for regular warfare, the Spanish officers' professionalism was tested by a great civil war in which they had to fight each other. Nevertheless, this does not prevent a military historian from asking how professionally prepared the Spanish officer corps was for such a conflict. This thesis has highlighted two features which, on the present writer's assessment of the evidence available, were deeply influential on the Spanish army officer corps' professionalism and military doctrine: corporate factionalism in the branches of the service and a concept of war as a psychological battlefield. Corporatism weighed both in the military's penchant for meddling in politics during Alfonso XIII's reign (an activity which also obstructed much-needed military reforms) and the army's internal struggles about professional promotion and responsibilities. The psychological image of war shaped the intellectual outlook of officers in the early decades of the twentieth century and influenced the ways in which they coped with technological innovation.

a) Corporate factionalism.

Corporate factionalism was not a new phenomenon in the Spanish army. It had existed throughout the nineteenth century. An explanation of its survival into the twentieth century lies in the fact that the Restoration's military policy failed to centralize institutional power within the army. Instead, institutional power remained fragmented amongst the branches of the service, which had developed a prickly factional corporate spirit in the previous decades. Corporate factionalism and a deeply rooted belief in the military's right to meddle in politics whenever necessary were a

dangerous mixture because they could easily turn a professional friction within the army into a political showdown. And this happened when reformist policies threatened the vested interests of a section of the army.

The most important such interests were those related to the procedures for promotion (because they affected the professional career of all the officer corps). Disagreements within the military about this issue unleashed the crisis of the juntas de defensa and the conflict of Primo de Rivera's government with the artillery corps. The nature of civil-military relations under the Restoration regime (whose ruling elite relied on the military to check a process of social-political change after 1900 to which the former was unwilling or unable to adapt) meant that such professional conflicts became major political issues, on which the survival of governments depended.

General Cassola's miscarried reform of 1887-1888 might well have prevented such dangers. Cassola wanted to overcome corporate factionalism by taking the first steps towards introducing what can be called a 'general staff system'. It was based on the creation of a general staff, which would be the highest professional body of the army. Besides carrying out organizational and planning functions, the general staff would bring institutional power to the centre, imposing its authority on the rest of the army. It would achieve this purpose by becoming an elite outfit, whose entrance requirements had to set the standards for promotion in the officer corps. And this would lead to the implementation of a new pattern of military career.

The general staff system offered an officer a way for fast-track promotion by proving his ability in the general staff service

(i.e. the performance of staff duties, which were alternated with tours of regimental service in his parent corps). Actually the officer had to prove his professional proficiency beforehand by passing the entrance examinations and the syllabus of the staff college. Such a sieving process was supposed to select the ablest candidates for high command. Of course, this system was not necessarily a guarantee for picking up real military talent (gifted officers whose views did not fit the prevailing orthodoxy could be underrated). But it at least offered standard criteria for advanced promotion and for joining the elite from which generals were usually selected.

Above all, it introduced a degree of fairness in selective promotion. The many cases of promotion achieved through the arbitrariness of political factionalism, nepotism, flattery or cronyism - instead of real professional merit - which happened during much of the nineteenth century had produced distrust about promotion by merit or selection among the Spanish officers. Within this environment, it was logical that many sections of the officer corps ended up thinking that, faute de mieux, seniority must be the only rule for promotion, because it was not subject to the whim of the officers' political or military patrons. Seniority promotion suppressed such a source of internal frictions and gave the officers a stable career pattern, so it was introduced as the sole way of professional advancement in peacetime after 1889. Unfortunately, this decision still allowed merit (i.e. elective) promotions in wartime, and the overseas campaigns of 1895-1898 and the Moroccan conflict (1909-1927) revived within the military the controversy about merit promotion.

A major problem with seniority promotion was that officers had no incentive to excel in their professional duties. Nonetheless,

the worst effects of undemanding, perfunctory soldiering could be limited if an officer was passed over (and forced to retire) when he failed to satisfy minimum standards of proficiency. But there is some evidence that, in practice, passing over was not applied thoroughly by the Spanish military, even in cases of serious physical handicap. Officers were inclined to display corporate solidarity by overlooking professional flaws which had unfavourable repercussions on the personal records of their comrades. This did not help to overcome the stagnation stemming from saturated army lists (a legacy of the civil and overseas wars of the nineteenth century), which left lots of officers without any useful duties to perform. But stagnation in the military career was better than no military career at all for officers who did not see professional or financial advantages in leaving the army prematurely.

Attachment to an undemanding promotion system was just one of the forces which helped to obstruct the introduction of a general staff system after 1890. The Spanish General Staff itself, after its creation in 1904, had many difficulties in asserting its institutional position, which produced frictions with the War Ministry. The disbandment of the General Staff in 1912-1916 and 1925-1931 is a sign of the distrust it generated among politicians and generals who had got used to the Restoration's delicate balance of political-military power.

Factionalism was also behind the resistance to introducing the general staff service, which would have broken the prerogatives of the staff corps. Indeed, the staff corps's resistance was partly successful, since it forced the compromise of 1893. Although the staff corps officers were to share staff duties with the new staff diplomados, the corps would survive. But this compromise also

opened a new front of corporate rivalry, which did not disappear until 1932, under Azaña.

The controversy about the general staff system was not the only issue which divided the Spanish officer corps. Military education was another matter for controversy. The widespread factionalist outlook could take root early in the officers' minds due to an organization of military education based on separate corps academies. And this fragmented arrangement probably made it easier to implement syllabi which suited the parochial interests of each branch. Thus the specialist corps could indulge in syllabi of heavy scientific and technical content, to the detriment of professional subjects. And, in the end, all the Spanish military education had a rather bookish nature until the 1920s. Traces of these features can be found in the republican army's officer training organization of 1936-1939, and may help to explain why the republican side was not so successful in creating its own version of the nationalist 'temporary second-lieutenants'.

The training of these nationalist officers inherited a part of the ethos which had inspired military education in Franco's General Military Academy of 1927-1931. Following General Primo de Rivera's guidelines, the General Military Academy stressed the moral element in the training of officers, who above all must become tough combat leaders. And - through socializing in the same academy - it developed amongst the officer candidates the idea of the military as a single corporate body. The nationalist officer training during the Civil War could not fulfil the latter aim (there were several temporary officer schools), but this was offset by ideological commitment.

Corporatism also weighed in the Spanish military's coping with

technological innovation. The automatic machine gun and the tank were introduced during the period covered by this thesis, and both weapons got entangled in corporate controversies about who should be their operators. Such controversies, on the other hand, may be inevitable whenever a new piece of ordnance displays features which did not fit the existing modus operandi of a branch of the armed services.

Thus, by 1900, it was not clear what kind of weapon the machine gun was. Was it a support weapon for the infantry? Was it a special artillery piece? Or was it a weapon which required a brand new, separate tactical arm? The infantry and the artillery were naturally rivals in the competition for corporate control of the machine gun. But in the Spanish case, the institutional arrangements for the testing and the procurement of new weapons meant that the artillery corps was in charge of the process to choose a model of machine gun. The artillery corps, although claiming its right to be the legitimate operator, was unenthusiastic about the machine gun. This led to corporate procrastination which delayed the adoption of the machine gun, since the infantry could not intervene in technical responsibilities which the artillery corps kept zealously as its private domain.

As a result of these circumstances, by 1907, when foreign armies had already started equipping themselves with machine guns, no decision had yet been made in Spain. Technical reasons are an unconvincing excuse for such a situation, since there were already machine gun models which were reliable and suitable for the needs of contemporary armies. Distrust of a weapon which might 'belittle' the artillery's role on the battlefield, and a small-minded self-interest in protecting corporate responsibilities, are

better explanations of the evidence available.

Unlike early machine guns, the tank had a faster acceptance, surely because it had proven its value on the battlefields of the First World War. Nevertheless, as happened to the machine gun, the infantry and the artillery contended for early tanks as well - even though both corps displayed limited enthusiasm towards the new weapon. There is evidence showing that the Spanish military did consider the compromise of creating a functional service which grouped all the tanks under a single corporate command (creating a fully-fledged armoured corps was doubtless too daring an idea). But finally, corporate factionalism prevailed and the Spanish armour was divided into two separate forces of infantry and artillery tanks. The actual consequences were not serious due to the Spanish tank arm's small size during the 1920s and early 1930s. Indeed, the artillery corps seemed to have lost interest in having its own armour when the Civil War broke out in 1936.

Thus the infantry was the sole corporate operator of tanks during the Civil War, since neither the republicans nor the nationalists sought to set up a separate tank corps. Therefore, it must be no surprise that tanks were usually employed as a support weapon for the infantry units and that the overall performance of armour, despite the presence of foreign advisers on both sides, was unremarkable. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the contemporary thinking on armoured warfare and the conditions of the Spanish Civil War, it would be unfair to blame the Spanish officers in an unqualified way for implementing the pre-war doctrine on armour.

b) **Warfare as a psychological contest**.

The morale-based concept of warfare - which can also be called 'the paradigm of the psychological battlefield' - cannot be

overlooked when trying to understand the professional outlook of Spanish officers during the four decades preceding the Civil War - and even the period beyond it. The Spanish infantry tactical regulations after the 1880s tended to suit tactics to the effectiveness of fire power. However, a section of the military argued that a resolute advance in defiance of fire power was the best way to overcome (especially at the tactical level) the difficulties arising from new firearm technology. This conduct was not sheer retrogressive obstinacy, but it found intellectual support in the contemporary doctrines of anti-positivist irrationalism and social Darwinism. Indeed, from 1905 on, the doctrine of the offensive became more fashionable and took shape in the Spanish infantry with the 1908 provisional tactical regulations and the even more offensive-minded 1913 regulations.

Most of the future senior commanders in the Civil War were learning their profession as students in the military academies or had just been commissioned when the Spanish army was adopting an offensive bias in its tactical doctrine. Since they did not pass through the grim experiences of the First World War, they did not feel the same urgency to change their minds that those foreign officers who had known first hand the realities of modern warfare did. Moreover, the Moroccan campaigns (where quite a few future senior officers in the nationalist - and later Franco's - army pushed forward their careers) were a type of conflict in which material factors could be easily underrated, whereas the morale-related ones, displayed through an offensive spirit, were thought as decisive as ever.

Therefore, it must not be surprising that, especially in the early weeks of the Civil War, a lot of nationalist commanders seemed to be rather offensive-minded. Their reliance on the

virtues of the offensive might well have been a recipe for defeat, by encouraging them to move forward and attack against odds. But the nationalists were fortunate because their main enemy were the ill-prepared militias raised mostly by the Spanish leftist outfits.

Certainly, the republican militias - despite tactical setbacks - prevented the nationalist forces (whose backbone were regular troops) from achieving several of their main objectives in northern Spain. This can be explained by the Spanish army's limited capacity to overcome even a poorly organized enemy, especially since much of the early fighting in the north took place in mountainous areas, which restrained the options for offensive manoeuvring.

By contrast, in the more open theatre of operations of southern Spain, small nationalist columns of regular troops (from the Army of Africa) beat the militias again and again in the late summer and early autumn of 1936. These nationalist forces displayed a strong offensive spirit during their advance to the gates of Madrid. Although sheer offensive-mindness was not to be sufficient to seize the capital, let alone to win the war, this initial offensive-minded attitude of the nationalists was successful long enough to bring about an inferiority complex in the republican forces for much of the war (and the republicans' own offensive fiascos doubtless strengthened this feeling). This kind of subjective factor can weigh on the way armies perform in campaign as much as any other: the reader may think of the Union's Army of the Potomac in the first half of the American Civil War, or, in the Second World War, of the British army in the Far East until their troops became convinced that Japanese soldiers were not unbeatable in jungle warfare.

The initial victories could not fail to imbue a feeling of moral superiority in the nationalist army and its commanders, whose outlook was still highly influenced by the psychological concept of warfare as a clash of wills. This feeling also helps to explain the nationalist command's trust in the capacity of their troops to withstand heavy odds. Ambitious republican offensives against thinly-held fronts (Brunete, Saragossa) were disrupted by small nationalist garrisons which held on against overwhelming enemy forces. Even if these garrisons were finally overrun, their resistance slowed down the enemy advance and gave the nationalist reserves enough time to fill the gaps. On the other hand, the feeling of moral superiority, and the consequent unwillingness to accept any enemy success, may account, at least in a partial way, for some nationalist command decisions which prolonged the fighting and/or consumed resources for goals whose military soundness was at least questionable. Examples would include the determination to keep the bridgehead in the campus of Madrid university after the failed assault on the Spanish capital in late 1936, or the counter-offensive in Brunete (July 1937) - an unsuccessful attempt to eliminate a small salient without significant military value.

Another outcome of the morale-related concept of warfare was a strong support for manoeuvre warfare, as opposed to the attrition battles of the First World War. A very common conclusion of the contemporary Spanish military essayists was that the trenches of the Western Front were an aberration which was not to be repeated. Therefore, it is not surprising that many officers held doubts about the French-inspired, fire-power-based doctrine which was officialy adopted in 1925. Moreover, they were aware of Spain's limitations in implementing effectively a doctrine requiring many

material resources, and aware also of the very different geographical context of mountains and rugged ground which cover much of Spain's territory.

These essayists envisaged that future military conflicts on Spanish soil would be fought through manoeuvre warfare since it would not be possible to develop long fronts fortified in depth. This kind of warfare required a type of major unit combining self-reliance and mobility. The existing Spanish standing infantry division was reckoned unsuitable by these essayists. From this background emerged the so-called composite brigade, probably the Spanish military's most original contribution to warfare in the twentieth century. It was not the product of a single mind, but - as a survey of Spanish professional literature of the 1920s and 1930s shows - a concept which was shared by quite a few officers. Thus the republican army did not need much - if any - foreign advice or inspiration to base its force structure on the composite brigade.

Turning the rump regular army and the motley assortment of militias available in the late summer of 1936 into a working military outfit was no mean organizational achievement, and credit must go to the republican professional officers. Unfortunately for the republican side, developing a well-thought out force structure was not enough for winning the war. The republican operational command structure required, in order to work effectively, numbers of officers which the republican side did not have. Efficient major unit commanders and staffs are not made overnight, and the republican officers' progress in field commands was too slow. The nationalist army, on the contrary, operated with a leaner command structure, despite having more professional officers, and, once its force structure was standardized, the division remained as the

elementary major unit. This policy was not innovative, but it did not scatter professional expertise (and, in view of the unremarkable nationalist generalship, cynics might add that it perhaps prevented even more incapable officers from holding senior commands).

Finally, another outcome of the psychological image of warfare was the tendency to underrate technology. Such a tendency is shown clearly in the cases of the machine gun and the tank. The machine gun was a piece of firearm technology which seemed a symbol of a major contemporary tactical problem: moving troops forward in the firing line. Since technology was the cause of the problem, technology-based procedures could also provide a solution, or a partial one at least (indeed, the campaign of Melilla had shown the positive effects of using machine guns frequently on the battlefield). But the contemporary military mind set was unwilling to follow a path which overturned its intellectual foundations and its stress on psychological factors. The machine gun's tactical role was based on the delivery of a huge volume of fire power, but it was underrated by the military because it did not provide the moral virtues that armies needed to conquer on the psychological battlefield.

The First World War did not change such thinking much. Technology-based solutions to the tactical stagnation of trench warfare were reckoned as temporary remedies for quite exceptional circumstances, at best, or as aberrations, at worst. Although the Spanish army certainly was interested in the tank before the world conflict was over, this interest did not turn into the pursuit of a policy of mechanization. Financial constraints certainly ruled out the creation of a large armoured force. But armour did not arouse a remarkable enthusiasm in the Spanish military either. The

official doctrine - embodied in the Spanish 1928 tactical regulations - reckoned the tank as a support weapon for the infantry. Not that the pioneers of mechanization and their ideas were unknown; they were not, but they were judged too radical. Nonetheless, there were signs in the early 1930s (such as the cavalry's increasing interest in the use of armoured vehicles) which showed that the Spanish army did gradually develop a more positive attitude to mechanization.

During the Civil War, the Spanish field commanders continued to be attached to the pre-war doctrine on armour and did not introduce any significant change. In fairness, this is not surprising. Armoured warfare could not be really tested in the Spanish Civil War because the armour used by both sides was not adequate (in quality or numbers) for the operations of mechanized armies, nor was the terrain where many of the main battles and campaigns were fought suitable for armoured forces. Nonetheless, the republicans, unlike the nationalists, seem not to have kept a fully coherent policy on the use of tanks. On the one hand, the pre-war regulations were the official doctrine, but, on the other, the republican command issued instructions - based on operational experience - which sometimes were in conflict with the former. This perhaps would have been just a minor problem for an army whose field commanders were versed in the essentials of tank warfare. But this was not the case in the republican army, many of whose commanders were not even professional officers. Thus the underperformance of the republican armour is hardly surprising.

To sum up, the Spanish army was short of material resources (a situation which the army itself was to a large extent responsible for because of its reluctance to undertake reformist policies), but it was not out of date in terms of doctrine and knowledge of

military developments. Indeed, from this last point of view, it could bear comparison with other European armies. But its overall professional preparation would have been better if the narrow-minded tribal spirit of the corps of the service had not been an obstacle to implementing reforms in the way officers were trained and promoted, and if the psychology-based distrust of technological innovation had not been an obstacle to modernizing its weaponry. What would have been the course of the Spanish Civil War if the army had been better prepared and equipped is a matter of guesswork. But one may also wonder if the events after 1899 which led to the civil conflict of 1936 would have happened at all if the exclusive interest of the Spanish military during the early twentieth century, untroubled by non-professional issues, had been preparation for war.

APPENDIX I. GLOSSARY.

Agrupación: i) a task force, whose strength can go from a regimental group to an army-sized command; ii) the name of some regiment/brigade-sized standing outfits.

Bandera: i) an infantry or tank battalion of the Spanish Legion; ii) a infantry battalion formed by volunteers of Falange (a Spanish fascist-inspired political party) in the Civil War.

Cuerpo: i) a self-administering unit (it was usually the regiment, but smaller units down to company size could also be cuerpos, as well as some artillery and engineers territorial commands; ii) the name for the branches of the army which had been originally set up as single regiments (e.g. the artillery corps) or were not a tactical arm.

Estado Mayor: the body of officers performing staff duties at the headquarters of a major unit or an equivalent military command; there also was the Estado Mayor General (the body of general officers of the army), whereas the army's General Staff was called Estado Mayor Central.

Grupo: i) an artillery battalion; ii) a tactical sub-unit (stronger than a squadron) of a cavalry regiment; iii) a self-administering group (smaller than a regiment) of cavalry squadrons; iv) a self-administering group of companies in the engineers and the ancillary corps.

Tercio: i) an infantry regiment-sized unit of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; ii) the name of the Spanish Legion (founded as Tercio de Extranjeros in 1920 and later renamed El Tercio) until 1937; iii) the name of some regiment/brigade-sized units; iv) an infantry battalion formed by requetés (ultra-conservative monarchist volunteers) in the Civil War.

APPENDIX II. ARMY UNITS.

N.B. These translations do not follow the usage of any English-speaking army. Cavalry terms are in brackets.

Regimiento	Regiment
Batallón (regimiento/grupo)	Battalion (regiment/group)
Compañía (escuadrón)	Company (squadron)
Sección	Platoon (troop)
Pelotón	Section
Escuadra	Squad

In the artillery, the company is called battery, and an artillery battalion is a grupo. The cavalry regiment had the administrative standing of a cuerpo, but its strength was on a level with that of the other corps' battalions.

The infantry regiment was a cuerpo and, unlike the British army, a tactical unit (usually with three battalions). Two regiments formed a brigade. However, since the nineteenth century, the Spanish regiments have rarely fought as tactical units. Instead, their battalions were distributed among the higher tactical units, although battalions of the same regiment could be grouped together. During the Civil War, indeed, the nationalist infantry's organization resembled the British regimental system: the pre-war regiments (and even separate battalions) were responsible for the organization and training of many of the new wartime battalions, which remained affiliated to their parent units. In the republican army, each composite brigade was the parent unit of its own infantry battalions.

The infantry had another regiment-sized tactical units: the light infantry (cazadores) and mountain infantry battalions were grouped in half-brigades (two or three battalions each); and during the Civil War, the nationalist army grouped their divisions' infantry in tactical units of three or four battalions, which were indistinctly named regiment, half-brigade or agrupación.

A special case was the Spanish army's Moroccan regular troops (regulares). In these forces, the infantry battalion and the group of cavalry squadrons were called tabor, and infantry and cavalry tabores were grouped into composite regimental units (grupos de fuerzas regulares) for administrative purposes.

During the Civil War, the organization of the other arms of the nationalist army also resembled a regimental system, although this procedure sometimes paid small attention to corporate or functional borders. For instance, the anti-tank gun units were affiliated to the Plasencia machine gun battalion, whereas sub-units of artillery regiments fought (at least for a while) as infantry troops.

APPENDIX III. COMMISSIONED RANKS.

Spanish army	British army
-	Field marshal
Capitán general	General
Teniente general	Lieutenant-general
General de división	Major-general
General de brigada	Brigadier
Coronel	Colonel
Teniente coronel	Lieutenant-colonel
Comandante	Major
Capitán	Captain
Teniente	Lieutenant
Alférez	Second-lieutenant

The rank of capitán general (literally, captain-general) is the highest one in the Spanish military, but after 1900 it became essentially honorific. It must not be confused with the appointment of territorial captain-general, who was the general officer commanding one of the major military districts.

Before 1918, the ranks of alférez (which can be literally translated as ensign) and teniente were called respectively segundo teniente (second-lieutenant) and primer teniente (first-lieutenant).

For most of the Civil War, the republican army adopted a single general officer rank, simply called 'general'. It also substituted the rank of mayor for that of comandante (in the Spanish army's usage, a mayor is the officer - whatever the rank - in charge of the administrative affairs of a cuerpo).

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